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**A Multi-Level Case Study Analysis of Campus-Based Male Initiatives Programs and Practices and
the Impact of Participation on the Perceptions of First-Year African American Male
Community College Students in Texas**

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the Impact of Participation on the Perceptions of First-Year African American Male
Community College Students in Texas**

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the mothers from the past, from which we have learned, the mothers of today whose constructive behaviors and actions shape the lives of their sons and daughters, and the mothers of tomorrow who will hopefully benefit from the lessons learned by those who endure the challenge of bringing up their children in this system of things.

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**A Multi-Level Case Study Analysis of Campus-Based Male Initiatives Programs and
Practices and the Impact of Participation on the Perceptions of First-Year African American Male
Community College Students in Texas**

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Valschkia Lisette Dabney-Smith, Ph.D.

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Supervisor: Walter G. Bumphus

Co-Supervisor: John E. Roueche, Jr.

This study examined the differences in engagement among entering African American male students at two community colleges in the State of Texas. Three research questions provided the foundation for this study: (1) Is there a significant difference in the engagement levels among first-year male community college students by age group, (2) From the African American male students' perspective, what are the specific educational programs and institutional practices that supported their retention and persistence during the first semester of enrollment in a two-year institution; and (3) In the case of the African American male students, what organizational and institutional factors influenced their decision to enroll for a second semester at a two-year institution?

The series of research questions developed for this study were tested using survey research, case-study analysis, and qualitative research. The descriptive analyses were conducted using a sample of the data collected from the 22 institutions selected to participate in the *Survey of Entering Students Engagement*

(*SENSE*) pilot survey. The *Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)* was used to compile the frequency statistics and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the 781 African American male study respondents. The effect size (Eta-Squared) was also calculated to identify relative magnitude of the difference between means that were found in the ANOVA results. The researcher also conducted focus groups and in-depth interviews with first-year African American male students who enrolled in a community college.

The results of this study indicated there were statistically significant differences among first-year African American male community college students by age group. The results also showed that African American male students who were involved in campus-based initiatives at their community college had higher levels of satisfaction during their first academic term. Finally, several of the focus group and individual interview participants indicated their participation in gender-specific programs influenced their decision to enroll for a second semester at a two-year institution.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

One of the functions of a community college is to provide strong academic and occupationally-focused associate degree programs that prepare students for the workforce or further study at a four-year institution. While students who pursue an associate's degree full-time can graduate within two years, current research on community college graduation rates indicate that many students do not graduate within two years of their first semester of enrollment. For African American male community college students, graduation and degree completion rates drastically lower than other students in their cohort. The *U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Completion Survey (1999)* reported the completion rates for African American males who attend community colleges are significantly lower than those for African American female students.

When compared to African American women or other student groups including, males and females from other racial and ethnic groups, African American men lag behind in college and university participation. Among African Americans, two females earn bachelor's degrees for every male. Men earn only 43 % of all college degrees. Female high school graduates are 16 % more likely to go to college than their male counterparts (Bailey et al, 2005, p. 16). The number of African American, Latino, Native American and Southeast Asian men who attend college and universities are decreasing, yet the decline in enrollment for African American male students remains problematic. In 44 of 50 states in the U.S., African American men are underrepresented in public colleges and universities compared to the rest of the population, and have some unique challenges for the African American community.

In a report entitled, *The Economic Impact of Stagnation of the Black Middle Class*, published by the *U.S. Commission on Civil Rights*, Besharov (2005) cites educational attainment as the main proximate cause of the stagnated growth of America's black middle class. According to data cited by Besharov (2005), there has been a 30-year rise in high school completion, college attendance, and college graduation rates by African Americans. Despite the increased college participation among African Americans in

general, the black middle class is diminishing. The *U.S. Commission on Civil Rights* (2005) concludes the more likely explanation for the decline in the black middle class is the increase in the college dropout rate and the low college graduation rate among African American men (p. 1).

For example, the current graduation rate for African American men is 18 % compared to 31 % for white men. Furthermore, Besharov (2005) attributes the differences in educational attainment to:

- Poor high school counseling, whereby high school counselors recommend students attend colleges for which they are not academically prepared.
- Unsupportive college cultures for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Financial aid formulas tilted in favor of the middle class, rather than directed to low-income families and student.

Besharov recommends better college counseling at the high school level, so that students are matched up with colleges for which they are academically prepared (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2005, p. 2).

To address the staggering college drop out rate among African American men, leaders and practitioners in the higher education community have forged new programs and initiatives to engage African American men in higher education. On a national level, American colleges and universities are implementing programs and initiatives to increase the achievement, engagement, and participation levels among African American men. Across all levels within postsecondary institutions, administrators, faculty, and staff facilitate a variety of campus-based programs for minority male students in the form of specialized student support and instructional programs that engage minority males in higher education. At the community college level, many of the newly formed entering processes include specialized mentoring programs, leadership development and training, and gender-specific student success courses that target minority male students.

If these specialized programs are, in fact, functioning in a way to improve participation levels of minority men in higher education, an understanding of the extent to which these programs improve engagement and achievement among minority male students is important. Harper (2006) a nationally-

renowned expert on African American male students in American colleges and universities, believes that higher education practitioners have to find out why men of color are disengaged from the postsecondary educational process. Likewise community college practitioners must extend their research beyond the typical surveys and into a more qualitative approach. Harper (2006) suggests it is easy to give them a survey, but it is more meaningful to sit with these students and hear their stories and this should be done on a regular basis, more than once a year. This study will attempt to categorize institutional strategies and the effects of various college features that keep African American male students engaged beyond their first semester of enrollment in a two-year institution.

By studying the educational experience of African American male students in public two-year institutions, community college practitioners can gain a better understanding of how the various gender-specific college features improve the overall matriculation rates among this cohort of students. Ewell (1994) asserts that because of their multiple missions and diverse student bodies, community colleges also present considerable challenges for leaders seeking to develop a systematic model for measuring program effectiveness. The research presented in this study can help to determine if there is a significant difference in the nature of experiences for African American male students who are exposed to various college features that are designed to increase their achievement through and beyond their first semester of enrollment in a two-year institution.

Background

In the face of enormous gains in educational attainment and marked improvements in employment opportunities, African American males continue to be overrepresented among the poor in the United States (McElroy and Andrews, 2002, p.119). Low academic achievement and college participation rates among African Americans have contributed to the high incidences of unemployment rates among African American men. For example, the *2005 Bureau of Labor Statistics* show that unemployment rates are highest for black persons, and that the unemployment rate of black males (10.5%) is higher than that of black females (9.5%).

Continuing on that same note, poverty levels among African American men is the highest among all minorities, which means that many African American children under the age of 18 are born into families that live below the poverty line. The U.S. Census data for 2002 indicated that 29.7 % of black males under the age of 18 are below the poverty level; and that 30.7 of black females under the age of 18 are below the poverty level. Furthermore, the combined figure for both males and females in this age group is 30.2 % below poverty level.

Similarly, the disparities in educational attainment among poor minority students have had a negative impact on achievement among minority students at every level of education. In 2004, Kay McClenney, director of the *Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)*, said of the disparity in educational attainment between well-off and poor students, and between White, Black, and Hispanic students: “The gap is dangerous. It is intolerable. It is a blight on America’s future. And it is worse in community colleges than elsewhere in post-secondary education” (McClenney, 2004a, p. 13). Despite the intentions of community college administrators, faculty, and staff, the participation and engagement levels for minority male students remain low and problematic. In 1994, 58 % of African American male high school graduates between the ages of 14 to 24 indicated they had enrolled in college at some point in their lives. Yet studies on male student retention and persistence indicate the persistence among African American male community college students remains stagnant and inconsistent.

Mazumder (2003) indicates that attending and graduating from college is correlated with many positive outcomes, including increased lifetime earnings, better health, and higher levels of civic engagement. McClenney (2004b) also suggests, “The future viability of communities, states, and the nation depends heavily on raising the overall educational attainment level of our citizenry” (p. 16). As global competition heats up, the U.S. is falling behind with respect to educational attainment. The statistics for educational attainment for minority male students are disproportionately lower than other student groups. Lower educational attainment generally correlates with lower employability and income; therefore, the

disparities in degree attainment for minority men have and will continue to have a negative impact on our economy.

In a discussion paper entitled, *As America Becomes More Diverse: The Impact of State Higher Education Inequality*, Kelly (2005) indicated “one reason that the U.S. is losing ground [in higher education] is our nation’s inability to raise the educational attainment of our minority populations to nearly the rates of whites” (p. 12). He also noted that the American values of social justice and equal opportunity should be sufficient reason to drive us toward equality in higher education, but the economic reasons are just as important (p. 6). On that same note, Kelly (2005) identified five economic and social trends that may result if the inequalities in American higher education are not addressed:

1. The U.S. population is becoming increasingly diverse. By the year 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau projects a 77 % increase in the number of Hispanics, a 32 % increase in African Americans, a 69 % increase in Asians, a 26 % increase in Native Americans, and less than one percentage point increase in the White population. The majority of the growth (in numbers) will occur among the populations that are the least educated.
2. The U.S. has lost its leadership role as the most highly educated nation in the world. The U.S. is also losing ground to several countries, particularly with respect to our younger population, which represents the future workforce.
3. History (from 1980 to 2000) shows that the educational attainment gaps between Whites and Hispanics, African Americans, and Native Americans are widening. If these educational disparities are not addressed, the anticipated demographic shifts will have a major impact on the educational attainment of the U.S. population.
4. Minorities (Hispanics, African Americans, Native-Americans, and Asians) earn substantially less than Whites at equivalent levels of education. These disparities, if unaddressed, will have a substantial impact on the total personal income of the U.S.

Hispanics, African Americans, and Native Americans are underrepresented at each stage of the educational pipeline—indicating that most state systems of higher education are doing a poor job addressing these disparities (p. 7).

The connection between lower degree attainment among African American men and the economic impact of this phenomenon is well documented. As the demand for a more highly educated workforce increases, the economic impact of lower degree attainment among African American males becomes even more significant. From a human capital and public policy perspective, enhancing student success by focusing on well-prepared, high-ability students is justifiable. College and universities must educate more people than ever before from a much wider, deeper, and more diverse pool of undergraduates (Kuh, 2005, p. 86). By doing so, postsecondary education institutions can help to alleviate the increasingly complex social and economic issues that are forthcoming. As indicated by Carnevale and Desrochers (2001), by 2020, our country will need 14 million more college-educated workers than the institutions of higher education are currently able to educate and graduate.

In 2003, the *Bureau of Labor Statistics* concluded that students with a two-year college degree will earn more than those with a high school diploma (Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2003). Community colleges are not just preparing students for their own benefit. They are preparing students to contribute to their neighborhoods, the nation, and the world (Lopez, 2004, p. 3). The philosophy of the community college is based on the joint commitment of providing workforce training and pathways to two- and four-year degrees. The open-door philosophy of the public two-year institutions has positioned community colleges in a role of serving any student at any educational level.

Nora (2001) suggests that community colleges should view themselves as unique institutions functioning to provide access to a wide range of students. Simply put, community colleges are the most cost effective institutions for improving access and equity for African American males in higher education. Furthermore, Esters and Mosby (2007) posit, “Community colleges must certainly recognize that the cost of implementing programs to improve the success of Black men could be substantial; however, the return

on their investment is far more rewarding to the nation than the possible costs of creating the programs” (par. 11).

Statement of the Problem

Nationally, African American men lag behind women and men from all racial and ethnic groups, in both college participation and degree attainment. Given these conditions, an analysis of the enrollment and completion patterns of African American males in community colleges should center on an examination of indicators that improve persistence and degree attainment among entering African American male student cohorts. In reality, educational attainment raises one’s potential income and social standing (Harvey, 2003). For a number of minority male students, the community college serves as the most effective route to degree attainment.

Much of the data on African American male college participation relate to the disparities in enrollment and graduation rates in comparison to females and males from other racial and ethnic groups. On the other hand, the body of literature regarding student retention and persistence among entering African American community college students is limited. More research on the first-semester experience of entering minority male students is necessary and can provide a closer look at organizational and individual factors that engage African American male students in higher education. The data provided in this research study can also help community college administrators build successful programs and initiatives to engage African American men enrolled in their institutions.

An understanding of the educational engagement of entering African American males in comparison to other entering males from other racial and ethnic groups is significant because the data from this type of study can be used to develop institutional programs and teaching strategies to improve the engagement and achievement levels among African American male students. Equally, a better understanding of the African American male students’ perception of institutional strategies that promote retention will be useful as community college administrators and researchers seek to define the strategies needed to promote student success among this cohort of male students.

Statement of Purpose

Research shows that the more actively engaged students are — with college faculty and staff, with other students, and with the subject matter they study — the more likely they are to learn, to persist with their studies, and to attain their academic goals. The purpose of this study is to augment the current body of research on the relationship between African American males by age group in relationship to student engagement programs for first-year students.

Although the presence of state and national programs to address this phenomenon demonstrates the commitment of college administrators, faculty, and staff, more research is needed to identify best practices among community college programs that aid in recruiting and retaining African American male students. Ascertaining differences in student engagement among African American males by age group can provide information pertinent to community college practitioners as they continue to develop educational practices and institutional strategies to improve retention rates among this cohort of students.

Research Questions

This study sought to examine the educational experience of community college African American male students in a public two-year institution. To accomplish this task, the researcher developed a research question based on the data collected from the *2007 SENSE* survey:

1. Is there a significant difference in the engagement levels among first-year male community college students by age group?

To explore the African American male students' perception of their first semester college experience, the final two research questions provided the foundation for the *Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA)* portion of the research study.

2. From the African American male students' perspective, what are the specific educational programs and institutional practices that improved their retention and persistence during the first three weeks of enrollment in a community college?

3. In the case of the African American male students, what organizational and institutional factors influenced their decision to enroll for a second semester at a community college?

The case study analysis for this study looked at the institutional programs and initiatives used to assist and support African American male students attending the two community colleges selected for the study. The focus group and individual interviews allowed for a comprehensive look at the experiences of the African American male students who volunteered to participate in the focus group and interview sessions.

Significance of the Study

Male students of color are less likely to persist and graduate, and little is known about their first-semester college experiences. Rarely is this phenomenon examined through a comparative analysis of the ways in which entering African American male students perceive their first semester experience during the first few weeks of enrollment at a community college. Only a handful of studies have systematically examined the experiences of African American male community college students, but rarely do they seek to bring in the perspective of entering male students. Moreover, community college programs and initiatives that are designed to support African American males are often studied through the lens of four-year higher practitioners who use identical conceptual models, variables and measures that do not address enrollment patterns that are unique to community colleges.

Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot (2005) suggest that a large number of students for whom higher education was never historically inclusive need the support of focused and intentional initiatives, tailored to their individual needs. Consequently, continued research that is specific to entering African American male community college students is needed in order to gain a full sense of what is needed to help this cohort of community college students succeed. Furthermore, campus-based qualitative research is needed to identify the features of community college systems and practices that aid in retaining African American male students. More specifically, research practitioners in higher education can benefit from a qualitative study, which centers on developing a better understanding of the first-year African American male student experience in community colleges.

The first step is to recognize the differences among student engagement for specific cohorts of students that exist in a community college, with a better understanding of educational practices, institutional and individual factors that improve engagement for specific cohorts of students. The research results from this study may also aid community college practitioners in establishing educational practices and institutional programs that increase engagement among African American male students.

Through their fiduciary responsibility for public funds and the appointment of presidents to their institutions, community college trustees profoundly affect the ability of the president to address the diverse needs of learners — and by extension, the ability of community colleges to serve the needs of Black males (Esters and Mosby, 2007, par. 6). This study is also significant to community college administrators, faculty and staff because it provides valuable insight from the African American male students' perspective of their college and classroom experiences. The qualitative data collected during this study can be used to develop a more culturally diverse teaching and learning environment.

Theoretical Perspective

For this study, the researcher employed a mixed methodology based on the post-positivist research paradigm. Crotty (2004) indicates the post-positivist paradigm is a less arrogant form of positivism, which talks of the probability rather than certainty and it claims a certain level of objectivity rather than absolute objectivity. The post-positivist assumption seeks to approximate the truth rather than aspiring to grasp it in its totality or essence (p. 27).

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) believe certain criterion that must be present for theory to be useful is the development of scientific knowledge. They insist a theory (1) should provide a simple explanation of the observed relations relevant to a phenomenon, (2) should be consistent with both the observed relations and an already established body of knowledge, (3) is considered a tentative explanation and should provide means for verification and revision, and (4) should stimulate further research in areas that need investigation (Anafara and Mertz, 2006, p. xvii). The Heisenberg principle states, "What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning." These post-positivist

principles suggest the researcher cannot observe a phenomenon without changing; therefore, the researcher may never obtain the full experience because the subjects know they are being observed.

Mertens (1997) indicates researchers operating out of the post positivist framework acknowledge "the complexity of establishing a definitive cause-and-effect relationship with social phenomenon" (p. 61). Post-positivism is based on two presuppositions. The first is that inferential reasoning leading to hypothesis construction and theory formation needs to be carefully linked to the empirical evidence. The second is that methodological rigor leads to an as accurate as possible analysis of the relationship between cause and effect. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), the researcher "approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis)" (p. 30). The post-positivist ontology suggests that reality is approximate and it cannot be fully apprehended. The post-positivist epistemology suggests that the researcher is a data collection instrument who in turn collects approximated realities. The methodology or the process to which the information is collected is usually observed through a rigorous qualitative process that is grounded in theory.

Methodological Approach

The series of research questions developed for this study were tested using three methodological approach—survey research, case-study analysis, and qualitative research. First, the descriptive analyses were conducted using a sample of the data collected from the 22 institutions selected to participate in the *2007 Survey of Entering Students Engagement (SENSE)* pilot survey. The *2007 SENSE* survey was piloted in 22 community colleges in eight states in the fall of 2007.

Next, the researcher performed a case study analysis of institutional documents and artifacts, which describe the campus-based programs used to support minority male students during their first semester of enrollment at two community colleges that participated in the *2007 SENSE* survey pilot project. The case study analysis allowed the researcher to identify the factors that might have been responsible for lowering, raising, or sustaining male students to enrollment the second semester.

Finally, the researcher conducted focus groups and in-depth interviews with entering African American male students who enrolled in one of the two community colleges selected as research sites for this study. The males who volunteered to participate in the focus group and interview activities were enrolled in a SENSE survey participating community colleges as a first-year student during the fall of 2007 or the fall 2008 semester. By collecting the data from two sets of first-year male students, the researcher was able to build on the perspectives of two groups of male students: (1) first-year male students who persisted beyond their first semester of enrollment and (2) first-year male students who were in the few weeks of their first semester during their first academic term. The interview data collected from both groups helped the research identify factors that influenced the students' decision to return to the college for a second semester.

Assumptions and Limitations

The researcher assumed that community colleges were attempting to provide targeted student services programs to support entering African American male students. The researcher also assumed the students who participated in the focus group and individual interview activities would be fully engaged in the activities and carefully considered the responses they gave to the questions asked. Furthermore, the qualitative focus group activities were limited to a small group of first-year African American male students at two institutions and the nonrandomized selection of the subjects were dependent upon the willingness of the subjects to participate.

This was also singular study consisting of entering African American male students enrolled in two community colleges in Texas; therefore, the students' perception of their first-year experiences may not be similar to the experiences of other male community college students in a different state or region. The sample size for study was small; therefore, the generalizations do not include information about other male community college students of varying age, ethnic origin, and socioeconomic status.

The focus group and individual interview sessions occurred over the course of one year, and the data collection was restricted to the first-semester of enrollment and the subjects were not tracked, as they

would be in a longitudinal study. Therefore, this study cannot be used to generalize beyond the students and the community colleges that agreed to participate in the study. Replication of studies with varying populations of male students, in different community college institutions over a longer period time is recommended. Finally, the study participants' responses concerning their recollection of their first-year experiences at the college may be subject to several variables.

Definition of Terms

African American – in relationship to this study, the term African American is used to describe individuals from African and American descent and it is used interchangeably with Black or Black American.

Cohort – this term is used to describe a group of students that have a statistical factor in common, for example, age, race, ethnicity, or first semester of the first year of enrollment in a community college.

Entering Students – for the purpose of this study, entering students will refer to students attending their first semester in their first year of college. This term will also be used interchangeably with first-year and First-Time-In-College (FTIC).

Student Departure – for the purpose of this study, this term refers to students who enroll in two-year institutions and depart during their first year of enrollment.

Student Persistence – for the purpose of this study this term refers to a student who completes a semester of enrollment in a two-year college and re-enrolls for a second semester. This term is also used to describe students who remain in two-year institutions until they earn their college degree or certificate.

Student Retention – refers to the consecutive enrollment for two consecutive terms. In the case of this study, retention relates to students who enrolled in the fall and spring semester of the same academic year.

Methodological Terms

The methodological definitions used in this section are relevant to the *Interactive Qualitative Analysis* (IQA) methodology and are based the information provided by Northcutt and McCoy (2004).

Affinities – are established by the focus group members and they represent a set of textual references that have an underlying common meaning or theme.

Sub-Affinities – are also established by the focus group members and they represent a set of textual references that are found within the affinities (main themes).

Axial Coding – is the process by which the IQA participants name and group the affinities and assigning each category to their subcategories. This process is also based on an inductive/deductive coding process.

Chapter Summary

When students leave college prematurely, the results can be devastating, especially for African American male students who never return to the institution. This study is significant because it provides an empirical basis for various community college practitioners to expand their knowledge of the challenges and opportunities inherent to developing educational programs and institutional practices that support African American male community college students to degree attainment.

Each of the following five chapters, were devoted to a specific aspect of this research study. The second chapter will provide an overview of the literature specific to issues related to African American males in higher education. The third chapter will provide details about the research design and the methodological approach used to achieve the results of the research study. More specifically, chapter three will identify the population for the study, the survey instruments used, and the procedures used to interpret the data. The results of the study are provided in chapter four. The final chapter will provide a summary of the major findings, conclusions, implications for further research, and recommendations for community college practitioners.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter supports a discussion on the literature related to recruiting and retaining African American males in higher education. The first section of the chapter provides an overview of the theoretical models that apply to the impact of student integration, retention, and departure on male student persistence. This is followed by a discussion about the current findings on recruitment, retention, persistence, and gender disparities among African American male students and their peers. Following the discussion on these key topics, the third section of the literature review will explore the themes related to institutional culture and institutional engagement. The final section of this chapter will conclude with a discussion about the current programs and initiatives community college leaders have developed to assist minority male students in public two-year institutions.

Theoretical Models

The retention of first-year minority male students is a complex social phenomenon, one that exists in both the community college and university environment. In community colleges, however, dropping courses is common and usually carries no significant repercussions other than lengthening the time to degree or transfer (Haegdorn, 2003, p. 10). The distinctions between community college and university engagement demonstrates the need for theoretical frameworks to address students with pre-college experiences that hinder their opportunity to succeed through their first semester of enrollment.

In educational research, it is important to establish the theoretical perspective used to frame the methodology, the data, and the analysis. Mertz and Anfara (2006) posits a theoretical framework can: (1) focus a study, (2) reveal and conceal meaning and understanding, (3) situate the research in a scholarly conversation, (4) provide a vernacular, and (5) reveal the strength and weaknesses [of the study] (p.192).

Tinto's Models on Integration and Departure

Vincent Tinto's models on student integration and retention are the most widely used theories in academic research on student persistence in higher education. Tinto's (1987) *Departure Model* suggests that the student's decision to remain in an institution is tied to the student's personal intentions and commitments. In his opinion, the integration process is related to how the student perceives his or her experiences and his or her ability to manage internal and external experiences successfully.

Tinto (1987) also noted that students must become aware and actively involved in college's recreational and intellectual activities in and outside of the classroom. By doing so, the student has a better chance of remaining in the institution. In relation to this study, Tinto's *Integration Model*, supports the probability that institutions that strive to align the institutional environment with the student's internal and external commitments have a much better chance of retaining their students.

Tinto's (1975, 1987) argument for greater academic and social integration suggests that these both are necessary and they improve student retention among college students. The *Integration Model* links academic and social integration to formal and informal social systems within the college, yet empirical tests of this claim have been criticized because the variables used to construct the academic and social integration measures are not consistent across all higher education institutions. Haegdorn (2007) believes that Tinto's theory on student departure does not fully address the challenges community college students face as they attempt to add college to their existing lifestyle (p. 9).

Bean's Models on Student Attrition

Similar to Tinto's *Integration Model*, John Bean's (1985) model on student attrition supports the idea that academic and social integration can have a positive effect on student retention, but it also emphasized the student's attitude as a predictor of their persistence. Besides the academic and social integration, the Bean's *Student Attrition Model* suggests there are four additional factors that increase the likelihood that a student will remain in college:

1. Student life activities and responsibilities must become routine,

2. Institutional communication on student life must be effective,
3. Students must be able to participate in classroom decisions; and
4. Student must receive rewards that are consistent with their efforts

Bean's model centered on nontraditional student attrition the impact of the environment on adult students and their decision to leave the college.

Astin's Theory of Involvement

Astin's (1977, 1984) *Theory of Involvement* suggests that students who are actively involved in the academic and social aspects of the college experience are more likely to interact with faculty. In contrast, students who rarely initiate and maintain contact with faculty or those who do not actively participate in campus activities may have a negative collegiate experience. His "students learn by becoming involved" theory supports five basic assumptions:

1. Involvement requires the investment of psychological and physical energy in "objects" (i.e. task, people, activities),
2. Involvement is a continuous concept—different students will invest varying amounts of energy in different objects,
3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features,
4. The amount of learning or development is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of involvement; and
5. The educational effectiveness of any policy or practice is related to its capacity to induce student involvement (Astin, 1985, p. 135-136).

Furthermore, Astin's *Theory of Involvement* suggests that the most persuasive types of involvement are "academic involvement, involvement with faculty, and involvement with student peer groups" (Astin, 1996, p. 126).

African American Men in Higher Education

Traditionally, the quest for learning has had a strong influence in the African American community, and education is viewed as a vehicle through which members of each generation could expand his or her range of opportunity. Between 1865 and 1965, each generation of African Americans received more education than the preceding generation (White and Cones, 1999, p. 52). Despite decades of progress, an examination of college attendance and degree attainment show that participation rates for African American males plummeted after 1965.

White and Cones (1999) suggests the interests in education, prior to the late 1960s, revolved around support from the extended family, educational institutions, civic groups, and the African American church and the decline in college attendance was due to contradictions in society that weakened the strength of these institutions. Likewise, Anderson (2000) indicates that during the 1970s, the fraction of college students who are male has dropped from about 56 % to under 44 %, leading the popular press to ask--where the boys are (p. 1). Across all level in higher education, African American male students fall short when it comes to college attendance and degree attainment.

Currently, African American men lag behind in college and university participation when compared to African American women or other cohorts including, males and females from other racial and ethnic groups. The next section of this chapter will focus on the gender gap that exists among female and male college enrollment, retention, and degree attainment.

The Gender Gap

Community colleges that have taken the lead in increasing resources and strengthening teaching in basic skills education for minority students are seeing their investments pay off, especially for female students. On the other hand, more work is needed to develop the same level of accomplishment among male students. Smith (1995) found that female students are more likely to persist as compared to male students regardless of the academic-year-to-academic year under consideration.

Across the United States, the gap in degree attainment among African American females and males is tremendous. In an article entitled, *The Growing Gender Gap in Black Higher Education*, Slater (1994) indicated that:

Black women are dominating almost every statistical measurement of black performance in postsecondary education. The consequences of these trends for the long term outlook for the black community in the United States could be very serious. Without a steady improvement in the educational attainment levels of black men, further reductions in the economic gap between the races seem highly unlikely. Without educational gains by black males in line with those of black women, a growing schism between the genders is not only likely to erode the relative earning power of black men but will also undermine their status in the black family and further hasten the disintegration of the traditional black family with all the social and economic consequences which that implies (pp. 52-53).

Access to higher education is essential for personal financial success in a knowledge-based economy. The mission of most community colleges is shaped by its commitments to serve all segments of society through an open-access admissions policy that offers equal and fair treatment to all students (Vaughn, 2006, p. 2). Over the last three decades, the research on the disparities among African American male college attendance has brought more attention to the inequities that exist in educational attainment for minority male students. The next section of the literature review will discuss the disparities in college enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment for male students.

College Enrollment

Harper (2006) suggests public educational institutions should uphold the social contract by offering access and distributing resources to ensure success among diverse groups of American citizens. Evaluation of the data on college access and enrollment reveals that college access for African American men is not equitable when compared to other gender, racial, and ethnic groups (p. 8). Likewise, the *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics* predicted that women's undergraduate enrollment is projected to continue growing faster than men's enrollment, and women are projected to make up 60% of enrollment in 2016 (2007a, p. 29). An important component is the behavior of earlier cohorts of women, who enrolled less frequently than males after high school graduation, but then made up for their lack of higher education by enrolling in higher education at a older age. More recently, though,

young female high school graduates are currently more likely than males to enroll in college (Anderson, 2000, p. 1).

The *American Council on Education* released a report entitled, *Gender Equity in Higher Education: Are Male Students at a Disadvantage*, which examined data on the educational achievement of men and women to determine the validity of reports that point to lower enrollment rates among men. One key finding in the article indicated the gender gaps among African Americans, American Indians, and Hispanics are huge. The study also indicated two-thirds of African American traditional college-age students are women (As cited in Dervarics, 2000, par. 2). Analysis of multiple data sources reveals the significance of the disparities in college attendance among African American men and this has created a the foundation for research to examine the disparities that exist among African American male college attendance.

For example, in 1995–96, women earned 60 % of associate degrees conferred (King, 2000). More the graduation rates among female and community college students are greater than male community college students. In 2007, the *National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC)* reported that 49.5 % of the total undergraduates enrolled in a two-year institution were male and 50.5 % were female (NCES, 2007b). In 2006, the *American Council on Education (ACE)* reported that African American men saw some progress with their share of enrollment rising from 37 % in 1995-96 to 40 % in 2003-04, but the gender gap is still larger for this racial group. The gap in college enrollment between African American and white men ages 16 to 24 is similar to the gap between Hispanic men and white men, but among women, the gap is larger between Hispanics and whites (2006, p. 8).

Furthermore, the *U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Completion Survey* (1999) reported the completion rates for African American men who attend community colleges are significantly lower than African American female students. In 2002, Black men comprised only 36.4 % of all students enrolled at institutions of higher education in the U.S.

Table 2.1: Fall Enrollment Percentages by Race/Ethnicity/Gender (2000-2004)										
	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
American Indian or Alaska Native	59.3	40.7	59.6	40.4	60.2	39.8	61.0	39.0	60.9	39.1
Asian or Pacific Islander	52.5	47.5	52.8	47.2	53.0	47.0	53.6	46.4	53.8	46.2
Hispanic	56.9	43.1	57.2	42.8	57.7	42.3	58.4	41.6	58.6	41.4
Black	62.7	37.3	63.1	36.9	63.6	36.4	64.1	35.9	64.3	35.7
White	55.4	44.6	55.4	44.6	55.6	44.4	55.9	44.1	55.9	44.1
All Students	56.1	43.9	56.2	43.8	56.6	43.4	57.0	43.0	57.1	42.9

IPEDS: Completion Survey (2007).

As demonstrated in Table 2.1, the fall enrollment percentages for African American men continued to decline over the past four years. In contrast, the fall enrollment trends for African American females have increased during the same period. Table 2.1 also indicates that African American men still do not fare well in terms of college enrollment, when compared to males from other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

College Persistence

The research on community college persistence demonstrates that the persistence rates among minority male college students are also problematic. DuBrock (1999) found that persistence among males and females during the first three years in college varies extensively and females are more likely than males to return to college for their second and fourth years in college, compared to males who are more like to return for their third year of college (As cited in Nora et al., 2001, p. 132). Most of the retention and persistence research conducted focus on students in general, or variables such as ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Further aggregation of the data in 1995 indicates:

In 2005, public and private higher education institutions in the United States awarded a total of 2,850,556 degrees at five levels: associate, bachelors, masters, first professional and doctorate. Of these 1,184,974 or 41.6 % were awarded to men and 1,665,582 or 58.4 % were awarded to women. For comparison, men are slightly more than 51 % and women are just less than 49 % of the college age population of 20 to 29 year olds in the United States. Through 1981 males earned more college degrees than did women each year. Then in 1982, women earned 7,235 more degrees than did men. By 2005, the gap had widened to 480,608 more degrees earned by women than men (Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2007).

The *Achieving the Dream* (AtD) initiative emphasizes the use of data to improve persistence and outcomes among community college student groups that traditionally have faced significant barriers to success, including students of color and low-income students. In a study examining the enrollment and persistence patterns of minority students included in the 2003 cohort of *Achieving the Dream* (AtD) community college students the data indicated that 72 % of females persisted to the second term, compared with 68 % (AtD, 2008, p. 2).

As demonstrated in Table 2.2, females were more likely to persist to the second and third years than males and female persistence rates were 5 percentage points higher than male persistence rates in both instances. For the African American male (64.5) students included in the *2003 AtD Cohort*, the persistence rates from one term to the next were consistently lower than their female (70.8%) counterparts.

Table 2.2: Percentage of the 2003 Achieving the Dream Cohort Persistence

	Persisted to Second Term*		Persisted to Second Year*		Persisted to Third Year*	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Native American	69.1	61.4	51.3	44.2	35.6	32.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	74.2	71.8	66.5	65.4	48.8	46.8
Black, non-Hispanic	70.8	64.5	55.6	48.7	35.1	28.3
White, non-Hispanic	71.5	67.8	58.9	54.0	41.4	36.0
Hispanic	73.4	68.6	61.0	54.1	34.3	30.5
Other**	73.8	69.8	61.3	58.8	41.8	38.3
Total	72.0	67.8	58.9	53.9	38.7	34.2

*Persistors are those who re-enrolled at any time during the year, completed or transferred. **Includes: Non-resident alien, more than one, and other. *Achieving the Dream* (2008).

The literature on the persistence and retention students of color demonstrate the need for specialized programs for male minority students. Based on the theoretical assumptions of Tinto (1987) five major conclusions have been drawn from prior studies on student persistence:

1. Encouragement and support can ease a student's transition from high school to college in all phases of the student's college life,
2. Varied sources of encouragement and support should come from faculty, staff, parents, and peers,
3. Academic and social experiences in college are influenced by the degree of support from others,
4. Student commitment to attaining a degree is not only related to integration into the university, but also the level of support and encouragement from others; and
5. A student's decision to remain enrolled in college is impacted by support from others.

For these to be helpful to male students, these student support elements must be integrated into the culture of the institution (Tinto, 1987 and Nora 2001).

Peterson and Delmas (2001) studied the effects of career decision-making, self-efficacy and degree utility on student persistence. The study sample consisted of 418 students who were enrolled in developmental education courses. Each of the students were administered the *Career Decision-Making Self-efficacy Scale* (CDMSE) and a modified version of the *Institutional Integration Scale* (IIS). Both instruments were used to measure the effects of career decision-making and self-efficacy on persistence. The results of the study indicated that degree utility plays an important role in helping to improve the persistence of students, especially non-traditional students who require remediation.

College Retention

In a study to determine the effects of gender on college persistence, Christen (1990) found that gender was strongly related to retention, with 30 % of the persistors being male and 70 % being female (As cited in Upcraft, Gardner, and Barefoot, 2005, p. 33). Peterson and Delmas (2001) also found that academic

integration and student career goals have significantly influenced student persistence. The results of the study also suggest that recruitment and retention models that reinforce the student's individualized educational plans are most effective because they reinforce the needs of the individual student. Retention not only has an impact on the individual and her or his family but also produces a ripple effect on the postsecondary institutions, the workforce, and the economy (Hagedorn, 2005, p. 102).

In a study to explore predictors of retention among African American men at a two-year institution, Hagedorn et al. (2001) analyzed data from three cohorts of men, numbering 202, over three semesters. The results of the study identified the factors that predicted success, for this cohort of male students, included their high school grades, the number of courses they were taking, their age, high school goals, and early identification of a college major.

Student retention programs are organizational variables that are typically defined by the administrators who decided the criteria for the retention programs that are integrated into the culture of the institution. With regard to building an institutional culture to support student retention, Parker (1991) recommends that higher education institutions should:

1. Create positions dedicated to handling retention activities,
2. Recognize the need for additional funding sources,
3. Establish mentor programs for minority students—programs that help minorities to see successful staff and students who can show them a path to success and that give them the confidence and support they need,
4. Reorganize faculty/staff duties and responsibilities to assist in retention activities, especially for institutions with limited resources,
5. Develop a reporting system for identification and tracking so that institutions can have accurate data and data processing capabilities on the different facets of their program; and
6. Develop faculty/staff training programs to better understand minority populations (p. 120).

Thomas (1990) author of the article entitled, *Programs and Activities for Improved Retention*, identified several activities that improve the social integration of minority students on college campuses. He also recommended that colleges should offer support programs that: (1) support a strong sense of community and tradition, (2) stress advisor, faculty, or staff contact during the first three weeks of school increases persistence, (3) emphasize a structured orientation for new students, (4) affirm parental support; and (5) provide part-time jobs so student can work on campus.

Degree Attainment

The gender gap among male and female community college graduates is steadily increasing, but men have experienced fewer gains than women in post-secondary education. Since the 1970's women have earned the majority of associate's degrees awarded by community colleges. The latest estimates on enrollment in the nation's community colleges indicate the number of women enrolled in community colleges exceed the number of men.

Although many researchers have studied the disparities in degree attainment among African American male students, few have conducted a comparative analysis of college experiences of African American male and female collegians. This type of studied is warranted considering the gaps in degree attainment among black males and female college students. For example, according to statistics from the *U.S. Department of Education*, males received just over 56 % of bachelor's degrees and associate's degrees awarded in 1972. By 1997, males received about 44 % of bachelor's degrees, and less than 40 % of associate's degrees conferred during that same year (Anderson, 2000, p.1).

The research points to a definite gap in enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment, between males and female, with the largest gap appearing among African American males and females at all educational levels. Among African Americans, two females earn bachelor's degrees for every male. Men earn only 43 % of all college degrees. Female high school graduates are 16 % more likely to go to college than their male counterparts (Bailey et al., 2005, p. 16).

In community colleges, degree attainment for African American men is higher than the degree

attainment at four-year universities. For instance, between 1977 and 2003, Black male degree attainment increased by an average of 0.2 percentage points and the most significant gains were at the associate's degree level (Harper, 2006, p. 8). Despite the increase in persistence among African males at the community college level, degree attainment levels are still lower than African American females.

For example, in 2002, black men comprised only 4.3 % of all students enrolled at institutions of higher education in the U.S., and there continues to be a disparity in degree attainment between African American men and their same-sex white counterparts. For example, across all degree levels, white men earned more than 10 times the number of degrees awarded to their black male counterparts (Harper, 2006, p. 8).

McLeod and Young (2005) insist that higher education institutions frequently function as if their primary task is to weed out students who are not suited for higher education (p. 75). In some cases, minority students are sometimes viewed as unqualified intruders. The persistence rates among community college students are not high enough, especially the persistence of African American men.

Though higher education institutions profess to serve the "whole student," the common distinctions between academic affairs, student affairs, cognitive and affective learning, classroom and residence halls, curricular and co-curricular activities lead to organizational structures, policies, and procedures that distinguish the different components of the student experience (McLeod and Young, 2005, p. 75). When institutions purport this type of culture, the results are detrimental to the students and it leads to increased drop out rates. The next section of this chapter will provide a discussion on key topic areas that related to the college experience.

The College Experience

Entering students require some form of engagement and this must occur as early as possible. Feldman and Newcomb (1969) suggest one of the major transitions from high school to college involves the unlearning of past attitudes, values, and behaviors and the learning of new ones. Enhancing the academic success for entering African American male students relies on academic and social integration

and institutional culture and the relationship between student engagement and educational outcomes for African American males and female students.

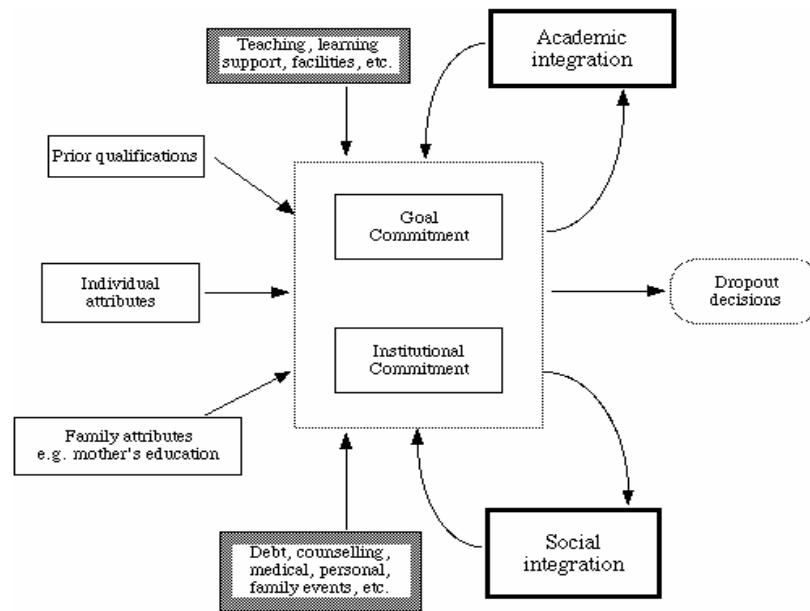
In a study exploring the relationship between student engagement and educational outcomes for African American and Hispanic community college students in the State of Florida, Greene (2006) found that females in the 18-24 year-old cohort were more likely than same-age males to be college-ready, and they were found to have statistically significant, higher term completion rates. The opposite was found to exist in the 25 and older cohort, where males had higher term completion rates and were more likely than females to be college ready. In general, being college-ready appeared to have the strongest, positive connection to college-level course outcomes for African American students (p. 224).

Academic and Social Integration

The research on student engagement for African American male community college students suggests that when designing educational programs, community college practitioners should consider academic and social interactions of male community college students. Student social and academic integration into higher education play a major role in determining the level of commitment the student has to degree completion at a particular institution.

Tinto's (1975) theory on academic and social integration states that student persistence to degree attainment is related to the level of academic and social integration the student experiences. Student who are academically and integrated into the institution are more likely to persist toward graduation. Draper's modified version of Tinto's (1975) retention model reinforces Durkheim's philosophy that solidarity is a collective social and institutional experience, rather than a psychological experience based on student perception (Figure 2.1). The revised model also emphasized Durkheim's idea that solidarity strengthens academic and social integration, which in turn imparts institutional ideas and values upon individual learner.

Figure 2.1: Draper's Adaptation of Tinto's Student Retention Model



Draper (2002)

Similarly, Astin (1993) suggests, “The student’s peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years” (p. 398).

Institutional Culture

The commitment to improve the college experience for minority male students requires the support from community college leaders who are able to develop an institutional culture focused on improving access, equity, and achievement levels beyond the status quo. Roueche and Roueche (1993) suggest that despite having witnessed the socially turbulent times of early to mid 1950s, higher education, as a whole, did not adequately address the issue of improving the campus climate for ethnic minorities, because colleges have continued to be plagued by racist incidence, and ethnic minority student alienation, isolation, and incidents of racial insensitivity (p. 100). To promote change, community college leaders must integrate organizational strategies that maximize the efforts of programs and initiatives to support minority male students.

Community colleges are often the entry point for predominant numbers of African Americans seeking higher education. Among all undergraduate institutions, community colleges enrolled the largest portion of black students. In 1995-96, community colleges enrolled 43 % of black first-time-in-college students. Yet the institutional priorities are not in line with retaining a diverse student population because most colleges and universities fail to develop programs to support minority students.

The *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistic* (2002) conducted an educational longitudinal to identify the postsecondary experiences of the 2002 high school sophomore class. During this study, the 2002 cohort of students who had enrolled in and left a postsecondary institution were asked to give reason for leaving college. Of the students surveyed, 37 % indicated their exit was due to a financial consideration, 32.3 % indicated they left for other reasons, 25.5 % indicated they left due to family obligations, 13.8 % indicated class availability and scheduling conflicts, and 13.7 % indicated they were dissatisfied with their program, the school campus, and or faculty.

Commitment to programs that support African American male students must be present at every level of the institution. More specifically, the institutional philosophies and financial priorities should serve as the foundation of the admission, recruitment, and retention programs. Thomas (1990) author of the article entitled, *Programs and Activities for Improved Retention*, identified several activities that improve the social integration of minority students on college campuses. He recommends that colleges should offer support programs that: (1) support a strong sense of community and tradition, (2) stress advisor, faculty, or staff contact during the first three weeks of school increases persistence, (3) emphasize a structured orientation for new students, (4) affirm parental support; and (5) provide part-time jobs so student can work on campus.

Student retention programs are organizational variables that are typically defined by the administrators who decided the criteria for the retention programs that are integrated into the culture of the institution. With regard to building an institutional culture to support student retention, Parker (1991) recommends that higher education institutions should:

1. Create positions dedicated to handling retention activities,
2. Recognize the need for additional funding sources,
3. Establish mentor programs for minority students—programs that help minorities to see successful staff and students who can show them a path to success and that give them the confidence and support they need,
4. Reorganize faculty/staff duties and responsibilities to assist in retention activities, especially for institutions with limited resources,
5. Develop a reporting system for identification and tracking so that institutions can have accurate data and data processing capabilities on the different facets of their program; and
6. Develop faculty/staff training programs to better understand minority populations (p. 120).

In spite of the barriers to degree attainment, many African American female students make it to college and they remain in the system long enough to graduate, but male students are not experiencing the same progression toward degree attainment. Thus, recruitment, retention and persistence for male students are another concern.

Across the country, community colleges leaders are concerned about the engagement levels of minority male students. In every institution of higher education, student engagement functions as a measurement of the relationship between what the student has learned and how the institutions are functioning. Dwyer et al. (2006) posits that while student engagement is often used to measure the effectiveness of the institutional engagement processes, student engagement itself should not be viewed an index of student learning, rather it should be used an index of the nature and the extent of the student's active participation in the learning process (Dwyer, Millet, and Payne, 2006, p. 15).

Student Engagement

In 2006, George Kuh, director of the *Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research* and the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)* indicated, "For years, researchers have pointed to involvement in educationally purposeful activities as the gateway to desired outcomes of college. Students

who engage more frequently in educationally effective practices get better grades, are more satisfied, and are more likely to persist” (NSSE, 2006, p. 9).

Student engagement has compensatory effects on grades and persistence of students from historically underserved backgrounds (NSSE, 2006, p. 13). Turning entering African American male students into either associate degree recipients, transferees, or both requires careful attention to the educational practices and programs that improve academic progress among this specific cohort of community college students. Kuh (2005) suggests colleges and universities that are committed to student success intentionally organize the first weeks and months of college to reduce the prospects that their students will find themselves struggling to survive during the critical first year of college (p. 86).

For many community college and university practitioners, identifying successful approaches to enhancing the first-semester experience for first year students can be very daunting. At first glance, many assert that student success is tied to the student’s academic ability. Yet, prior research on student success indicates the single best predictor of student academic success is based on a combination of the individual student’s academic preparation and motivation.

Furthermore, Kuh (2005) suggests that colleges and universities have two primary obligations to first-year students. The first is to establish appropriately high performance expectations, inside and outside the classroom, that are appropriate to the students’ abilities and aspirations. He also suggests that college and universities should develop campus-based policies and programs that grab the students’ attention early. Kuh (2005) insists that educationally purposeful activities should tell students early and often what it takes to succeed (p. 99).

According to the results from the 2006 *NSSE* survey, gender differences do exist in some educationally purposeful activities. For example, among first-year students, women are more likely to do volunteer work and spend more time in academic preparation, while men are more likely to serve as tutors and to interact with faculty members outside of class (NSSE, 2006, p. 15). On the other hand, first-year male students who were more engaged in campus based educational programs reported they collaborated

with (1) classmates outside of the class room to prepare class assignments, and (2) faculty members on activities other than coursework including committees, orientation, and student life activities (NSSE, 2006, p. 16).

A variety of institutional support programs are linked to enhancing student retention. In order for these programs to be effective, the academic and social programs must be integrated into the culture of the institutions. Astin (1996) emphasized the importance of student involvement as a means to enhance students' cognitive and affective development. The three most important forms of involvement are academic, faculty, and student peer group involvement. He also suggests the institutional climate also has a powerful effect on student involvement and outcomes depending on whether the faculty has a research orientation or student orientation; one is likely to find a more student oriented faculty at private four year colleges and a research oriented faculty at public universities.

Student engagement among college and university students is often linked to the students' perception of their first year experience. To improve retention among first-year, some *Achieving the Dream* colleges are implementing clusters of strategies intended to make the first year in college more engaging and successful (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Achieving the Dream First-Year Experience Strategies for College Student Engagement

Student Engagement Cluster	Student Engagement Strategies
Student Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Make orientation mandatory.▪ Offer special orientation programs for subgroups of students.▪ Include advising and registration in the orientation process.▪ Create a college transition program targeting students who have delayed entry to college from high school by at least one year.
Advising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Create an early alert system for students experiencing difficulty.▪ Overhaul and evaluate computer-based career planning tools.▪ Establish an information center.
Student Success Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Create a student success course or improve an existing course.▪ Make a success course mandatory for first year students and/or developmental education students.
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establish learning communities.▪ Develop Individual Learning Plans for first-time in college students.▪ Incorporate learning-centered methodologies in the classroom, especially in first-year courses.▪ Employ multiple methodologies for student engagement in ESL classes.
Faculty and Staff Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provide professional development focusing on needs of first-year students.▪ Train faculty and staff in strategies that have proven effective in promoting student success.

Achieving the Dream (2006)

Greene (2006) suggests “Closing the widening participation and achievement gap in higher education for students of color is not only in keeping with the inherent promise of a democratic society, it is the only way to secure a prosperous future for the nation and its citizens” (p.8). In a study to identify educational practices that enhance the academic success of African American and Hispanic students enrolled in a community college in Florida, Greene (2006) confirmed that the relationship between student

engagement and quality educational outcomes exists. The results of the study also suggest that the educational experience varies considerably between and within genders (p. 266).

More specifically, Greene (2006) found in general, younger men were less engaged, less prepared, and less apt to return to school the following term, and they did not perform as well academically as did women. With regard to African American men, older African American men performed better academically compared to African American women and younger African American men. Based on the findings from his research study, Greene (2006) concluded:

Colleges concerned with the loss of men from the student population might consider intentionally targeting younger males rather than older males. Further, they should consider emphasizing efforts that effectively address issues of preparedness and others such as mandatory advising and/or student success course participation, that lead to the development of clear academic goals, semester-by-semester educational plans, and increased interaction with faculty (p. 266).

The finding from his research study suggests that student engagement and persistence among the male student population is or can be affected by the age and maturity level of the student. Similarly, others have linked student engagement and persistence to academic and social activities that are purposeful that are in and outside the classroom to improved educational outcomes (Astin, 1984; Kuh, 2001; Pascarella, 1978, 1980, 2003). This next section of the literature review will discuss some of the educational interventions community colleges have used to increase student engagement and persistence among their African American student population.

Educational Interventions

There are several institutional support strategies that community college administrators have incorporated into their student services programs to support the retention of African American male students. Carreathers et al (1996) suggest effective retention models should: (1) have the support of administration by incorporating retention/diversity into the strategic plan of the university; (2) recruit faculty for participation; (3) provide motivational lecture; (4) provide proactive financial aid counseling; (5) get students involved with programming activities; (6) maintain up-to-date knowledge on early assessment and intervention; (9) develop faculty mentoring; (10) develop leadership seminar; and (11)

develop and maintain a caring competent staff.

This next section of this literature review addresses some of the educational programs and practices that are associated with improving the engagement levels among entering students: academic counseling and advising, first-year student seminars and courses, student learning communities, mentoring programs, and student orientation programs. The goal is to establish an informed perspective on policies, programs, and practices that may influence persistence among entering African American male students in community colleges.

Academic Counseling and Advising

The *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)* surveyed more than 80,000 first-year students to identify the types of educational programs and activities first-year students used during their first year of attendance at a college or university. Many of the first-year students (88%) indicated they used academic planning or advising services during the academic year (2005, p. 16).

Academic advising is a strong institutional support factor for minority students. “A key message is the importance of goals. Students should know the value of academic planning and advising, of good advising, that is, the kind that helps them to chart a course toward their goals and identify the milestones along the way” (McClenney and Waiwaiole, 2005, p. 36). Furthermore, students benefit from services targeted to assist them with academic and career planning, academic skills development, and other issues that may affect both learning and retention (McClenney, 2004).

Counseling and academic advising is critical institutional effectiveness of programs and initiatives that educational attainment black male students. The results from the cohort of community college students surveyed during the *2006 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)* survey showed 89 % of survey respondents said that academic advising is somewhat or very important; 55 % report using that service sometimes or often (p. 18). Yet many students do not seek the help of academic counselors and advisors during their first semester of college because they are fully engaged in the academic and social aspects of the college environment.

Students who are not academically and socially involved on campus face greater difficulty in staying in college and their retention rates are typically lower than students who use the educational interventions provided on campus to help them navigate through the campus environment. Programs that integrate students into the academic and social environment of the campus can help to improve student retention. Berger (2001) recommends that college retention programs should:

- Provide students with clear lines of communication about goals, policies, and values.
- Provide opportunities for students to participate in organizational decision-making.
- Build a campus environment characterized by fairness toward students.
- Create a balance between structure and responsiveness.
- Engage students in political activity on campus.
- Provide advocates for students.
- Build shared meaning through symbols.
- Build on structural and symbolic connections with the external environment.
- Understand the nature of the organizational environment on campus.
- Assess student perceptions of organizational behavior on campus.

The recommendations from Berger (2001) suggest institutions that create opportunities for students to integrate into the campus environment will see an improvement in student retention persistence.

Student Learning Communities

Wild and Ebbers (2002) recommends there are three main issues that community college retention programs should reinforce: cohort groups, learning communities, tutoring, and supplemental instruction. Likewise, Tinto (2000) argued that classrooms act as small communities within an institution's academic and social structure, but for most students small communities may provide an experience which is disconnected from others and not engaging, especially in the freshman year. Thus, higher education institutions should establish formal and informal learning communities in- and outside the classroom to increase retention for male students.

The *Coordinated Studies Programs (CSP)* at *Seattle Central Community College* call for students to register for a common set of thematically linked courses. Though students enroll as if they were taking separate, discrete courses from different disciplines and fields, they attend the *Coordinated Studies Programs (CSP)* as one course that meets a total of 11 to 18 hours each week in blocks of four to six hours over two to four days. In most cases, the CSP courses are team taught by two to four faculty members who are present and active in all class sessions (Russo and Tinto, 1994, para. 3). Many of the interactive programs offered through the CSP program incorporate innovative teaching techniques that include the use of the internet, music, video, and guest lecturers from the community.

Russo and Tinto (1993) conducted a study to determine if the *Seattle Central Community College CSP* programs made a difference among first-year students. More specifically, Russo and Tinto (1993) longitudinal survey sought to identify the level of influence the academic and social learning communities had on first-year student participation and retention. The current and former student participants were asked to respond to a survey that asked questions related to the *Seattle Central Community College CSP*.

The results of the surveys indicated many of the *Seattle Central Community College CSP* students reported greater involvement in academic and social activities. These same students also reported that they perceived to have greater developmental gains and they showed a significantly higher rate of persistence than those who were not involved in *Seattle Central Community College CSP*. In response to survey questions, *Seattle Central Community College CSP* students reported greater involvement in a range of academic and social activities and greater developmental gains over the course of the year than did students in the regular curriculum (Russo and Tinto, 1993, para. 15). This research provides support for providing first-year students the opportunity to participate in a learning community.

Mentoring Programs

The most effective institutional strategies for retaining male African American students were found to be measures aimed at identifying at-risk students during enrollment and monitoring their academic achievement throughout the semester. Jacobi (1991) states that “whereas mentoring has been long

associated with an apprentice model of graduate education, it is increasingly looked upon as a retention model for undergraduate education” (p. 505).

Howard-Hamilton (1997) notes that African American men wrestle with psychosocial issues of greater complexity, that may be due to the experiences and the traditional theories of student development that are not be relevant or inclusive. She also notes that mentoring and engagement activities provide the necessary tools to negotiate the challenging circumstances Black males experience.

A recent study to examine *University Transition Programs at North Carolina State University (NCSU)* provided some interesting findings as they relate to mentoring programs for African American students. In this study, Lee (1999) examined mentoring relationships and their effect on retention for African American students. This study consisted of 120 students in the *University Transition Program* at NCSU. This program’s goal is to help academically unprepared students transition into the university. Lee (1999) used focus groups to explore the student’s perspective on: (1) their adjustment to NCSU, (2) the value of having a faculty mentor, and (3) the importance of having a mentor who has the same racial or ethnic background.

The findings indicate that adjustment to college was more difficult for this group of students. However, the students who participated in the focus group activities were quite optimistic about their future at *NCSU*. They also indicated that they would like to have a faculty mentor because they believed it would help with their academic and professional development. As a final point, the students in this study indicated that having an African American mentor was less important than having a mentor in their career field. Surprisingly, some students in this study indicated that they did not consistently have positive interactions with faculty members.

LaVant, Anderson and Tiggs (1997) studied faculty mentoring programs offered at higher educational institutions. During their research, they observed both African American male and female students who interact and become involved in mentoring programs find greater satisfaction in their collegiate experiences than those who are not involved in similar programs. Based on their observation of

mentoring programs initiatives, the researchers specified that mentoring programs for African American men can be effective and viable if leadership within the institution is committed to the concept of a formal mentoring program.

Student Orientation Programs

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) suggest orientation programs serve as an early socialization function and they involve a series of experiences by means of which individuals come to anticipate and understand the value and behavioral norms as a member of the community (p. 650). Glass and Garrett (1995), in a study of four North Carolina community colleges, found that completion of an orientation program during the first term of enrollment promotes and improves student performance regardless of age, gender, race, major, entrance exam scores, and employment status (As cited in Rideaux, 2004, p. 54).

Student orientation programs provide entering students with access to individuals, programs, and services that introduce the student to the values of the institution. Introducing students to available support services, key administrators, student social life, and major and degree requirements, and early course registration is important for students and institutions (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, p. 650). In turn, students are able to make a more seamless transition into college.

Upcraft and Schuh (1996) posit that “Participation in orientation programs and freshman seminars have also been positively linked to persistence and degree completion” (p. 9). Many colleges and universities offer orientation programs to first-semester students during the first or second week of enrollment, yet current research on this subject indicates the need for programs to support minority students beyond the first few weeks of enrollment. Orientation and intervention programs that are most effective in improving minority student retention are those that help these students understand the relationship between the social and academic challenges they will face as a result of interacting with students and faculty of other races (Hrabowski, 2005, p. 133).

Students experience college in different ways and given the range of the diverse population among entering students in two-year institutions, it is difficult to design a “one size fit all” orientation program for

entering male students. While orientation programs among two year institutions vary, Miller (1999) suggest that orientation programs should:

1. Assist new students in understanding their responsibilities within the educational setting;
2. Provide new students with information about academic policies; procedures, requirements, and programs sufficient to make well-reasoned and well-informed choices;
3. Inform new students about the availability of services and programs;
4. Assist new students in becoming familiar with the campus and local environment, and
5. Provide intentional opportunities for new students to interact with faculty, staff, and continuing students (p. 137-138).

Derby and Watson (2006) examined orientation programs and African American student retention in the context of community colleges. In particular their study investigated the differences between an orientation course and student retention measures, for African American student retention. During their research, they studied three cohorts of African American students who enrolled in a public mid-size community college from the fall semester of 1999 to spring semester of 2002.

The results of the study indicated that a greater proportion of African American students, who enrolled in the orientation course, during this time period, remained enrolled within the institution and persisted across time, as compared to a smaller proportion of students who did not enroll in the course, dropped out, and did not persist across time (Dustin and Watson, 2006, p. 382). Although differences were found to exist between orientation course enrollment and retention for all three cohorts the results of this study were inconclusive for African American students due to small sample sizes for those variables. Dustin and Watson (2006) recommend that community college practitioners collect and track data on students' goals throughout the students' matriculation in order to gain a vivid picture of how to operationally define retention among African American students who attend community colleges.

Student Success Courses

Many first-time college students arrive on campus unprepared to succeed in college. This is especially the case for community colleges, which pursue an “open-door” mission of serving all students, regardless of prior educational background (Zeidenberg, Jenkins, and Calcagno, 2007, p.1). Institutions of higher education often face the challenge of serving students who are under prepared for college level courses. Community colleges, in particular, have accepted the challenge of serving students who may arrive on campus with poor study skills and little or no concept of what it takes to succeed as a college student. Collectively, community colleges and universities across the nation have worked to develop student success courses to support students who are at-risk, academically under prepared, and lack the basic skills needed to succeed and persist.

Several community colleges have implemented policies that require degree seeking first-year students to complete a student success course. In 2007, Zeidenberg, Jenkins, and Calcagno studied the effects of student success courses on student persistence among a cohort first-year students enrolled in community colleges in Florida. The results of this research study revealed that enrollment in a student success courses had a positive marginal effect on a student’s chances of earning a credential, persisting, or transferring (Zeidenberg, Jenkins, and Calcagno, 2007, p. 5). The researcher recommended further quantitative and qualitative research is needed to understand these effects over a five year period. The next section of this chapter will expound on the most cogent theories on student persistence and academic success.

Theoretical Implications

Tinto’s revision of the *Student integration Model (SIM)* suggests colleges that provide mentors, role models, and peer counselors for minority students have more success with their students persisting to degree attainment. He also determined that isolation and patterns of incongruence also affect a student’s decision to depart; therefore, community colleges must work harder to provide support for students with

responsibilities outside of school because they often do not have time to participate in college academic and social functions.

The literature on the persistence and retention among students of color demonstrate the need for specialized programs for male minority students. Based on the theoretical assumptions of Tinto (1987), five major conclusions have been drawn from prior studies on student persistence:

1. Encouragement and support can ease a student's transition from high school to college in all phases of the student's college life;
2. Varied sources of encouragement and support should come from faculty, staff, parents, and peers;
3. Academic and social experiences in college are influenced by the degree of support from others, and
4. Student commitment to attaining a degree is not only related to integration into the university, but also the level of support and encouragement they receive from others.

A student's decision to remain enrolled in college is impacted by support from others. For these to be helpful to male students, these student support elements must be integrated into the culture of the institution (Tinto, 1987 and Nora 2001).

Similar to Tinto's *Student integration Model (SIM)*, the Pascarella et al. (1987) model on student persistence is concerned with student-institutional fit which suggests that change is a function of the (1) student's background and pre college characteristics, (2) structural and organizational characteristics of the institutions, (3) institutional environment, (4) interaction with socializing agents, and (5) quality of student effort. Although student engagement among African American male students has become an issue for many higher education institutions, how student engagement is defined and measured differ by institution.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) suggest that student engagement is reinforced by the students' level of campus engagement, particularly in academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular activities on campus. However, Kuh et al. (2005) suggests that student engagement also refers the way in which

institutions allocate resources and organize learning opportunities and services to encourage students to participate in and benefit from such activities (p. 9). Since institutional programs and services have been linked to student engagement, many community college leaders have begun to evaluate the types of learning opportunities they offer to low performing students.

Although there is significant evidence of the commitment to improve campus-based programs and initiatives that are inclusive and engaging for all students, more is needed to improve engagement and achievement levels among minority male students. Barefoot (2000) suggests:

We need more information about what works, as well as tested models and tools for assessment. We need evidence—not assumptions and not tightly held beliefs based on our own experience. Even classic student development and retention theories, which many of us seem to believe are timeless and irrefutable, need to be reevaluated in light of the changing characteristics of today's students: the way these students conceptualize involvement, the degree to which they want or need to be assimilated into "the college way," and their many options for learning environments in addition to the traditional college classroom (p.18).

The next section of this chapter examines the role of the community college and the innovative student support and instructional programs that promote the academic and social integration for African American males.

The Role of the Community College

The community college is a peculiarly American institution with a foundational belief in self-development and an unquenchable mission to extend education beyond the privileged classes (Hagedorn, 2003, p. 10). For more than one hundred years, community colleges have provided American citizens, especially minority students, with the opportunity to gain a postsecondary education. Moreover, Vaughn (2006) suggests that community colleges are distinguished from other institutions of higher education by their commitment to open access, comprehensiveness in courses and program offerings, and community building. These commitments shape the role and scope of the community college (p. 1).

The open-door institutional culture of the nation's community colleges has placed these institutions in a significant role because they can provide access to those who would not likely attend college. Green (2001) suggests, "Community colleges are far exceeding four-year colleges in providing

access and improving the retention of students of color and they continue to bear a disproportionate share of the burden of providing educational opportunities for these students” (p. 53). Although the nation’s community colleges are responding to the educational needs of a diverse student population, many minority male students entering community colleges are leaving college at a higher rate than other students in their cohort.

The community college system has been and still remains as the primary gateway to higher education for underrepresented and minority students. The efforts of community college practitioners to increase participation higher education and their response to the educational needs of a diverse student population have propelled community colleges into a position of elevated significance in higher education. This newfound notoriety is largely due to the community college’s ability to provide remedial and compensatory courses that improve the likelihood of college attendance for students who could not or would not consider earning a college degree.

Although community colleges deserve recognition for their ability to attract non-traditional and minority students to their campus, a review of the enrollment, completion, and subsequent re-enrollment for male students of color have not yielded successful results. Open access to higher education, as practiced by the community college, is a manifestation of the belief that a democracy can thrive, indeed survive, only if people are educated to their fullest potential (Vaughn, 2006, p.3). To succeed, students need educational programs and institutional support services that extend beyond what is offered to support learning in the classroom. In recent years, it has become apparent that it is not enough for community colleges to welcome all potential learners.

The next section of the literature review provides evidence of the current programs community college programs and initiatives, which are designed to increase engagement and achievement levels among African American male students. The role of the community college may shift as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other colleges and universities raise the bar on their undergraduate admissions criteria.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are typically portrayed as highly engaging institutions for African American male students. Bakersville (2008) indicated that HBCUs are doing an especially laudable job of recapturing lost and fallen youth, especially disproportionate numbers of African American males, at a time when 60 % of them do not graduate from high school with their cohorts (as cited in Minor, 2008, p.2). Fleming (1976) suggests that HBCUs are known for admitting students who are under-equipped for college level work, improving their academic deficiencies, and graduating them with the skills to successfully compete in society. The significance of HBCUs cannot be understated. Since their inception, HBCUs has provided a rich source of social capital for African American students and they have managed to educate African American males and females regardless of their academic and environmental circumstances.

Prior the 1837, African American men and women were excluded from obtaining a college degree. With the help of religious organizations and the *Freedmen's Bureau*, African Americans responded to these restrictions by opening the first “colleges” for blacks as early as 1837 when *Cheyney University* was founded in Pennsylvania. These early “colleges” served primarily as high schools for blacks and offered instruction in industrial or agricultural trades and teacher training. They ultimately evolved into what we know today as Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) (Wilson, 2007, p. 123). According to the U.S. Department of Interior (2008), there are 105 HBCUs across the United States which accounts for 3% of all colleges and universities nationwide. More specifically, about 214,000 or 16 % of all African Americans are enrolled in HBCUs (par. 1). Yet these institutions are not immune to the wide disparities in enrollment for men in general. According to the U.S. Department of Education, for the past four decades, women have made up a larger proportion of enrollment in these institutions than men. For example in 2001, women made up 61 % of the enrollment at HBCUs (NCES, 2004, p. 2).

More over within the past 165 years, HBCUs have faced greater challenges as they attempt to meet the changing characteristics of an increasing diverse student population and today's academic,

research, civic, and labor-force needs (Minor, 2008, p. 1). These multiple forces have fueled a new agenda for the emerging role of HBCUs contributed to confusion over mission of HBCU institutions. Although the 103 Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States share a common history they currently occupy diverse positions within the higher education milieu (Minor, 2008, p. 8). While HBCUs are doing more to educate African American males, many HBCUs are raising the bar on their admissions standards to compete with flagship institutions.

Texas Southern University (TSU) is the nation's second largest HBCU, with more than 11,000 students enrolled in 2007. The university's open enrollment policy contributed to the increase in enrollment and it opened the door to higher education for students with fewer educational options. Yet, the open enrollment admissions policy has fallen under much scrutiny after a period of negative publicity, chronically low graduation rates, and a long history of fiscal improprieties. Faced with the possibility of losing accreditation, Dr. John M. Rudley, president of TSU, has implemented new policies to improve the public perception of the university, and the academic reputation of the institution.

In May 2008, the Board of Regents for Texas Southern University (TSU) approved a plan to end the school's open enrollment policy, which granted admission to anyone with a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED). For the first time in decades, Houston's only historically black university will require new students to meet certain academic standards before being admitted into the undergraduate program at TSU (Kever, 2008, par. 1).

For admittance into Texas Southern University for fall 2008, prospective students will be required to graduate from high school with a minimum 2.0 GPA and take the ACT and/or SAT (no minimum score). Students who graduate in the top 25 % of their class will be automatically admitted. Any student who does not meet the University's minimum requirements will still have the opportunity to enroll at the University after successfully completing a conditional summer academic program (TSU, 2008, p.1).

Students who are admitted through the summer academy must pass the courses to be eligible for conditional enrollment in the fall semester. Those students who fail the summer academy courses will be

referred to a community college. Students who participate in “2+2” program established between TSU and local community colleges will be allowed to transfer to TSU after completing the first two years of transferable course work at a participating community college.

The adoption of higher admissions standards for undergraduate students at HBCUs will inevitably leave many minority male and female students, including African American males, disengaged as many 2007-2008 high school graduates will face the possibility of being turned away from HBCUs. With nowhere else to turn, community college may be the safe haven for many minority students who do not make the cut. Community colleges increasingly have been called upon to provide remedial and developmental programs and services to those students without adequate levels of academic preparation to succeed in college. The new admissions standards established by HBCUs who traditionally accepted students will present a new opportunity for community colleges to expand their reach to the students who are turned away from HBCUs.

A New Opportunity for Community Colleges

The mission of the HBCU, like that of other institutions, has evolved in relation to social context influenced by accountability and measurably high graduation rates. The distinctive nature of the mission of the community college and its role as open door institutions will ensure that students who are turned away from HBCUs are afforded the opportunity to make the transition from high school to higher education. Community college leaders should prepare for increasingly large number minority students who are turned away from HBCUs, and welcome them with open arms.

The demand for higher education has risen as the value of a high school education has declined in the marketplace of jobs and careers. The transmutable mission of the community college has placed the two-year institutions in a position to establish the organization to represent education's local, front-line interface with students who are turned away from HBCUs and other flagship institutions. Programs to address the transition from high school to college can help students who are affected by new four-year

college and university admissions standards. By doing so, community colleges can provide access to minority male and female students who are detoured from four-year institutions.

Evidence of Community College Programs

Cuyjet (1997) noted that in nearly all levels of education African American male students who come to school from the same home, parents, communities and economic conditions have significantly different school and achievement outcomes than their female siblings. He also suggests that because black men and women are different in some important ways; therefore, campus engagement activities designed to assist black men on campus may have to include special elements that apply to the needs of men alone (p. 15). Community colleges across America are implementing programs and initiatives to increase participation of African American males in higher education. These innovative programs are laying the foundation for higher education institutions who are interested in tapping into one of our natural resources, the educated male.

Several states including Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas are implementing programs to increase minority male participation in higher education. Many community colleges offer innovative student support and instructional programs that promote the academic and social integration for African American males.

In the state of Texas, several community colleges have established programs and initiatives to address the needs of African American males in their institutions. For example, *Cedar Valley Community College in the Dallas County Community College District*, created a special section of a human development course that focuses on African American male issues. In addition to reading and writing assignments, students must select a personal growth project in which they identify an area in which they will work and report over the semester. Two other Texas campuses in the *Dallas County Community College District*, *El Centro College* and *Richland College* also have programs and initiatives to support minority male students.

Located on the campus of the University of Toledo (OH), the *Student African American Brotherhood (SAAB)* established its first chapter at Georgia Southwestern University, in 1990. During the past 17 years, SAAB has established chapters at community college campuses in Illinois, Michigan, Mississippi, and Texas. Since 2005, SAAB has received financial support from the Lumina Foundation and this funding organization is currently working to develop a planning module to ensure consistency among the new SAAB chapters. The training provided by SAAB is instrumental in creating a campus climate and an institutional culture that supports the success of African American male students.

Steering committees and institutional advisors help to develop a college strategic plan and two-year colleges are expected to provide mentors to African American and Latino high school and college students who enrolled in the program. This type of model supports institutional integration at every level. Plans to branched out and to create chapters on other campuses has resulted in the partnerships with: *Foothill College (CA), Community College of Allegheny County (PA), College of DuPage (IL), Northeast Texas Community College (TX), the College of the Mainland (TX), Joliet Junior College (IL), Kankakee Community College (IL), Prairie State College (IL), Northwest Business College (IL) and South Sub-urban College (IL)*. The SAAB model provides a three-month program period, during which they organize and develop a strategic plan for their college.

The North Carolina Community College System (NC) provides support to African American males through the Minority Male Mentoring (3MI) program initiated through five community colleges in the district: *Wayne Community College, Durham Technical Community College, Mitchell Community College, Piedmont Community College and Southeastern Community College*. Financial support for each college was provided by The Governor's Crime Commission in the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Safety and private donors.

The primary goal of the *Minority Male Mentoring Project* is to increase the graduation and retention rates of minority males attending community colleges. Program participants attend retreats, community service activities, personal growth workshops, drug and substance abuse education. Students

who participate in the *3MI Program* must complete a college student success course, which meets twice a week during the semester.

In 1998, St. Petersburg College (FL) established the *Brother-to-Brother Program (B2B)*. *Brother-to-Brother* provides academic and student services and personal enrichment activities to advance intellectual and personal growth among African American male students. Male students who participate in B2B receive help and advice through services: academic advising, tutoring, early academic alerts, textbook lending library, career planning, laptop lending, cultural seminars and workshop. Students enrolled in this program are also eligible to receive a scholarship to support the education. The goal of this program is to ensure that African American males stay in school, graduate and transfer to a four-year university, and learn ways to effectively address life's challenges.

Many two-year institutions have gone through great lengths to ensure their African American male students remain in college. Efforts to improve participation among males have focused on highlighting the best practices of programs and initiatives that forge this issue into the forefront of economic and social issues related to increasing educational attainment for African American males. For example, several community colleges have hosted conferences and workshop related to increasing the participation of African American males in higher education attainment.

Chapter Summary

A review of the literature indicates that there are a number of strategies that contribute to the recruitment and retention of African American male students. For example, students who attend orientation programs and first-year seminars are more likely to persist than others. Similarly, the persistence rate of mentored students is higher than that of students who do not have this support. However, it has been argued that the most effective strategy to prevent drop out and or attrition involves a total institutional commitment to implement policies to support the academic and social integration of African American male students on campus.

The specific areas of activity in which policies fostering retention can be implemented are academic advising, administrative policies and procedures, enrolment management, faculty participation, student orientation programs, and male mentoring programs. Furthermore, the information gathered from a review of the literature suggests a need to conduct a study, which includes the use of a quantitative and a qualitative methodology. The next chapter provides an explanation of the methodological approach the researcher used to obtain the research results.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The intent of this study was to examine the educational experiences of African American male students in a public two-year institution. The qualitative and quantitative nature of the data sets used for this study provided the foundation for a mixed methodology design using quantitative data from the *Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)*, a case-study analysis, and qualitative focus group and interview activities. To construct a deeper understanding of the results, the researcher utilized the triangulated methodological approach to develop an intimate understanding of the phenomenon. According to Denzin (1984), methodological triangulation uses more than one approach to increase confidence in the interpretation. The need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to confirm the validity of the processes. In case study research, this could be done by using multiple sources of data (Yin, 1984).

Stake (1995) indicates that triangulation protocols ensure accuracy and they allow the researcher to provide alternative explanations for the phenomenon in question. By triangulating data from the SENSE survey, the case study analysis, the focus group activities, and the individual interviews this study established a baseline against which to identify effective educational programs and practices that improve engagement among entering African American male students in a two-year institutions. To further clarify the methodology used for this study, this section of the chapter frames the methodology in terms of the research design, data collection, and data analysis processes.

Research Design

This study sought to examine the educational experience of entering community college African American male students in a public two-year institution. The researcher developed a research question based on the data collected from the *SENSE* survey:

1. Is there a significant difference in the engagement levels among first-year male community college students by age group?

The investigation of the 2007 *SENSE* survey responses according to these descriptive factors helped the researcher identify patterns and multiple comparisons by different groups of entering male community college students. To answer this research question the researcher used a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests to ascertain the differences in the distribution of entering African American male survey participant responses categorized by age group. The researcher also used the effect of size to (η^2) to identify the relative magnitude of the difference between mean results found during the one-way ANOVA tests.

The second phase of the research process was based on a case study analysis. The purpose of the case study was to identify the institutional programs and initiatives that influence persistence among entering African American male students at a community college. Yin (1994) suggests researchers may use the case study model to: (1) explain complex causal links in real-life interventions, (2) describe the real-life context in which the intervention has occurred, and (3) to describe the intervention itself; and explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear set of outcomes.

The case-study analysis provided a collection of data from a variety of resources, which in turn helped the researcher to build a framework that could be used to identify the actual changes in educational practices and institutional programs that occurred as a result of the college's effort to improve the first-semester college experiences and engagement levels of African American male students. During the case study analysis, the researcher reviewed institutional documents to identify the programs and practices offered to entering African American male students implemented by the two community colleges that participated in this research study.

The final area of inquiry sought to classify the first-semester experiences of African American male community college students. In order to explore the African American male students' perspective on these issues, the following research questions provided the foundation for this component of the research study:

2. From the African American male students' perspective, what are the specific educational programs and institutional practices that supported their retention and persistence during the first semester of enrollment in a two-year institution, and
3. In the case of the African American male students, what organizational and institutional factors influenced their decision to enroll for a second semester at a two-year institution?

To answer research questions two and three, the researcher facilitated focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with 25 entering and returning African American male students who were currently enrolled in the two community colleges selected for the study.

The research used a two-part process to collect the qualitative data during the focus group and individual interview sessions. First, a modified version of the *Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA)* research methodology was used to identify the factors (affinities and sub-affinities) that influence persistence among first-year experience for African American men in a community college setting. The IQA methodology is a qualitative data-gathering process that depends heavily on group processes to capture a socially constructed view of the respondent's reality (Northcutt and McCoy, 2004, p. 299). The major themes established during the IQA process are referred to as affinities, which are elements of the system that are used to code and analyze the data collected during the silent brainstorming sessions held during the first stage of the focus group session. Next, the researcher selected 27 questions adapted from the 2007-2008 *MetLife Foundation on Student Success-Starting Right Focus Group Moderator Toolkit* were used to guide the discussions with the study participants (Appendix H).

The quantitative and qualitative research methodology used for this study provided the researcher with the information needed to identify the effective institutional programs associated with increasing student engagement among African American male students. This three-part research methodology also permitted the researcher to investigate the individual experiences of the male students and their perception of their first semester experience during their first academic term at their particular college.

Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to document the first-semester experiences of African American men enrolled in a community college and their perception of their first-semester experience. To understand the study respondents' perception of their engagement levels at their community college, the researcher utilized secondary data from the *2007 Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)* pilot survey. To gain a sense of the differences in college experiences and engagement levels for first-year African American male students, the researcher classified the male student responses by age group, degree utility, and whether they were first generation college students. By doing so, the researcher could triangulate the data and provide a statistically descriptive glimpse of the patterns equivalent to the voices of individual students (Hagedorn, 2003, p. 21).

The next phase of the research study was designed to investigate the effects of educational programs and institutional practices that improve the engagement and the first semester experience for African American male students in the community colleges. The case-study analysis allowed the researcher to use a variety of qualitative data sources including surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews to obtain the perspective of the study participants.

The final phase of the research study was designed to facilitate the development of a systematic description of the African American male student's first-semester experience. Ultimately, the results from this research study will allow community college practitioners to construct an institutional plan that would ensure positive outcomes for African American male students. With regard to qualitative research, Anafara and Mertz (2006) asserts that a useful theory, that tells an enlightening story about some phenomenon and the story itself, brings forth new insights, which broadens the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon. The focus group and individual interviews provided the opportunity to gather the students' perception of the programs and initiative provided by the institutions they attend.

Phase One: The 2007 SENSE Pilot Survey

Developed by educational leaders from *the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin* and a technical advisory panel of nationally recognized experts, this new survey instrument focuses on institutional practices and student behaviors in the earliest weeks of college. The *2007 SENSE* survey instrument was designed to assess the institutional practices that affect first-year students during the earliest weeks of enrollment in college. The *SENSE* survey is a research-based tool with multiple uses:

- Diagnosis — identifying the areas in which entering students are thriving and those in which they are struggling, so colleges can target improvement efforts.
- Benchmarking — examining college results in light of national benchmarks for effective educational practice with entering students.
- Monitoring — documenting and improving institutional effectiveness over time and helping colleges examine the impact of interventions aimed at improving students' earliest collegiate experiences.
- Accountability — demonstrating institutional results and progress in supporting entering students. Institutions may choose to use SENSE data to respond to accrediting agencies' calls for institutional self-study and quality improvement strategies (CCSSE, 2007a, par. 1).

The *2007 SENSE* survey was chosen for its ability to allow multiple comparisons of entering community college students using different variables including: age, gender, race, and enrollment status.

Developed in partnership with the *Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)*, the *2007 SENSE* survey is grounded in research which centers on what works in retaining and supporting entering students. The *2007 SENSE* survey was designed to collect and analyze data about institutional practices and student behaviors in the earliest weeks of college in order to provide community college institutions with a systematic way to understand the early experiences of first-year students.

The data from the 2007 *SENSE* survey can help colleges understand students' critical early experiences and improve institutional practices that affect student success in the first college year (CCSSE, 2007a, par. 1). During the fourth and fifth weeks of the fall 2007 semester, the 2007 *SENSE* survey was administered to community college students in randomly selected courses that most likely enroll students in their first semester of their first year of enrollment.

Table 3.1: SENSE Pilot Survey Community College Participants (2007)

State	Institution
Texas	Alvin Community College
	Brazosport College
	College of the Mainland*
	El Paso Community College
	Houston Community College System*
	Lee College
	Lone Star College
	Northeast Lakeview College*
	Northwest Vista College
	Palo Alto College
	Richland College*
Florida	San Antonio College
	St. Philip's College*
Ohio	Wharton County Junior College
Florida	Broward Community College
Kansas	Butler County Community College
Colorado	Community College of Denver
North Carolina	Durham Technical Community College
New York	Kingsborough Community College
Virginia	Paul D. Camp Community College
Ohio	Sinclair Community College
	Zane State College
(*) Community colleges that have institutional programs and initiatives to support African American male students.	

CCSSE (2007)

A paper copy of the 2007 *SENSE* survey was issued to students in the random sample of course sections during class during the fourth and fifth weeks of the fall semester (Appendix A).

Sense Survey Participants

A total of The 2007 *SENSE* pilot survey was administered in 22 community colleges and yielded 13,233 usable surveys. The 39-question 2007 *SENSE* survey yielded 5296 records from entering and returning male respondents (Table 3.1). To narrow the focus of the study, the researcher explored the differences in first-year college experiences and engagement levels between and among entering male community college students by age, race, and ethnicity. The demographic profile of the total number of male students who participated in the 2007 *SENSE* pilot survey is represented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Description of 2007 SENSE Survey All Male Respondents (N=5296)	
Category	Respondents
Race/Ethnicity (N=5246)	
American Indian or Native American	(66) 1.3%
Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander	(294) 5.6%
Native Hawaiian	(7) 0.1%
Black or African American, Non-Hispanic	(781) 14.9%
White, Non-Hispanic	(1925) 36.7%
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish	(1926) 36.7%
Other	(247) 4.7%
Student Age (N=5258)	
18 to 19	(2677) 50.9%
20 to 21	(1086) 20.7%
22 to 24	(628) 11.9%
25 to 29	(394) 7.5%
30 to 39	(310) 5.9%
40 to 49	(110) 2.1%
50 to 64	(43) 0.8%
65+	(10) 0.2%
Entering/Returning Respondents (N=5296)	
Entering	(3038) 57.4%
Returning	(2258) 42.6%

Source: SENSE Survey Respondent Data (2007).

As shown in Table 3.2, 781 (14.9%) of the male respondents indicated they were of Black or African American, Non-Hispanic descent.

To provide a more detailed response to research question one, the researcher also disaggregated the data according to the number of African American male respondents. This process yielded 781 records for entering and returning African American male survey respondents. Table 3.3 provides the demographic profile of the entering and returning African American male students who participated in the 2007 *SENSE* pilot survey:

Table 3.3: Description of 2007 SENSE Survey African American Male Respondents (N=781)	
Category	Respondents
Student Age (N=770)	
18 to 19	(353) 45.8%
20 to 21	(156) 20.3%
22 to 24	(95) 12.3%
25 to 29	(62) 8.1%
30 to 39	(59) 7.7%
40 to 49	(28) 3.6%
50 to 64	(15) 1.9%
65+	(2) 0.3%
Entering/Returning Respondents (N=781)	
Entering	(448) 57.4%
Returning	(333) 42.6%

Source: SENSE Survey Respondent Data (2007).

As shown in Table 3.3 a total of 770 African American male respondents identified their age group and 781 answered the question related to their enrollment status. As show above, more than half (57.4%) the African American male respondents indicated they were entering students.

The 2007 *SENSE* survey questions ask students to report the frequency with which they engage in dozens of activities during the first few week of enrollment in their community college. The responses

given by the survey participants represent their level of involvement in a number of campus programs and activities including: academic counseling and advising, student learning communities, student orientation programs, and student success courses. The students were also asked to measure the quality of their experiences with college staff, faculty, and other students. Additional items listed on the *2007 SENSE* survey assess the amount of reading and writing students did during the current school year, and the number of hours per week they prepared for their academic coursework.

The *2007 SENSE* survey evaluation process is based on two major components: the survey instrument, which provides detailed quantitative data and the *MetLife Foundation on Student Success-Starting Right Initiative Focus Group Moderator Toolkit*, used to gather the qualitative data from the focus group participants. For this study, the researcher will use the quantitative data from the 2007 SENSE survey to determine whether there are differences in engagement between African American males by age group who responded to the 2007 SENSE survey.

In line with the process used by the *Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)* to process the results from the *2007 SENSE* survey, the researcher selected 27 questions from the *MetLife Student Success Focus Group Moderator Toolkit* which provided a full range of focus and interview questions which guided the focus group and individual interview process (Appendix G). In all research, finding a starting place for sorting the data collected can be one of the greatest challenges for the researcher. To narrow the focus of the study, the researcher explored the differences in first-year college experiences and engagement levels between and among 781 African American male community college students by disaggregated by age group.

Survey Data Analysis Procedures

The data from the 2007 SENSE survey will help the researcher understand what happened during the first few weeks of enrollment in a community college from the student's point of view. The case study analysis, focus group, and individual interviews will better inform the researcher or why the student's have drawn certain conclusions about their first year experience. With permission from the *Community College*

Survey on Student Engagement (CCSSE), the researcher used the data collected from the 22 participating community colleges to set the tone for the case study and the qualitative focus group and interview sessions that were held at the two community colleges selected for this research study.

The purpose of this phase of the study was to determine if there are statistically significant differences among the entering and returning African American males who responded to the 2007 Survey. To identify areas where there were true differences, the researcher used a three-part statistical procedure to measure the differences between the mean score for African American male respondents by age group. The *Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)* was used to compile the frequency statistics and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the 781 African American male study respondents. The one-way ANOVA statistical formula was used to determine if statistically significant difference existed across the multiple age groups. The purpose of one-way ANOVA is to decide whether the differences between the samples are simply due to random error (sampling errors) or whether there are systematic treatment effects that have caused scores in one group to differ from scores in another. The magnitude of the effect size was also calculated to identify relative magnitude of the difference between means that were found in the one-way ANOVA results.

The effect size also known as strength of association, or Eta-Squared (Eta^2) is used to measure the relative magnitude of the difference between means. In other words it describes the amount of the total variance in the dependent variable that is predictable from knowledge (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001, p. 52). The Eta-Squared (Eta^2) represents the proportion of variance of the dependent variable that is explained by the independent the variable. Eta-Squared (Eta^2) also represents the proportion of variance associated with or accounted for by each of the main effects, interactions, and error in an ANOVA study (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001; and Thompson, 2006). The standard procedure for interpreting the strength of the effect size, as established by Cohen (1998) follow these guidelines:

- .01 = a small effect
- .06 = a moderate effect

- .014 = a large effect

The procedure for interpreting the strength of Eta-Squared (η^2) is based on guidelines established by the *CCSSE*, the survey administrator. For this study, the items queried during the final interpretation of the one-way ANOVA results with a (η^2) greater than .20 were considered to have a large effect on the results, and those items were deemed as statistically significant. The following statistical formula was used to calculate the effect size of the one-way ANOVA results for each item:

$$\eta^2 = \frac{SS_{\text{effect}}}{SS_{\text{total}}}$$

To calculate the strength of the effect size (η^2), the researcher divided the sum of squares between-groups (SS_{effect}) by the total sum of squares for all effects, interactions, and errors (SS_{total}) as shown in the one-way ANOVA results tables in chapter four. To sum up the findings for this phase of the research study, the compiled summary tables describing the one-way ANOVA and effect size for each question selected from the *SENSE* survey.

Phase Two: The Case Study Analysis

Yin (1994) suggests that using the case study approach provides the researcher the opportunity to examine documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. The researcher used the triangulation approach to add depth to the research findings and to identify similarities and differences among the sample responses. The data collected from the interviews, observations, and a collection of institutional artifacts were used to identify the types of student success programs and initiatives used within the two community colleges to support first-year African American male community colleges students. This allowed the researcher to use a holistic approach to identify the types of practices implemented at both institutions. When a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed, case studies are an ideal methodology (Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg, 1991). According to Tellis (1997), case studies have been used in varied investigations, particularly in sociological studies, but increasingly, in instruction.

The purpose of the case study analysis is to identify policies, procedures, and programs that contribute to increase retention rates for African American male students. Snow and Anderson (cited in Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg, 1991) asserted that triangulation can occur with data, investigators, theories, and even methodologies. To accomplish this task, the researcher conducted a case-study analysis specific to the campus-based engagement techniques that were used to improve the engagement and achievement levels among minority male students, during their first-semester experience.

Triangulation is often thought of as a way of checking out insights gleaned from different information or different sources of data (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p. 80). To triangulate the data further, the researcher conducted focus group and individual interview sessions with entering and returning African American male students to capture their perception of the educational programs and institutional interventions offered at their community college.

Phase Three: Qualitative Inquiry

To understand the factors that affect African American male community college retention, the researcher conducted focus group sessions and individual interviews with a sample of 25 African American males who enrolled in two community colleges in Texas. This strategy helped the researcher collect rich data on how the African American male study participants' perceived their first-semester experience at their community college.

The Interactive Focus Group Sessions

Bean (1990) asserts that researchers might establish a fairly precise understanding of why an individual student left a college or university, but each student has a different story to tell (p.148). The interactive focus group sessions included a component that allowed the focus group to classify or code the data into themes. The themes represent the dimension of the problem and the relationships among the issues that derived from the focus group activities.

The focus group sessions included 22 first-year African American male community college students selected by the researcher and/or campus administrator. The focus group sessions lasted

approximately 90 minutes. The two focus group sessions facilitated an interactive interview process to allow the research study participants to describe and label their first-semester experience by articulating their thoughts during a silent brainstorming session (Appendix E).

Next, the researcher used a modified version the *Interactive Qualitative Analysis* (IQA) data collection and analysis technique to code and label the focus group participants' community college experiences and the relationships among their experiences. The silent brainstorming process allowed each focus group participant to think and reflect on their first-semester experience and the programs, initiatives, resources, and support systems that helped them complete their first semester of college (Appendix F). During this process, the focus group participants are encouraged to produce as many cards as possible. Silence and privacy was to reduce undue influence by peers in the group.

After the silent brainstorming session, the note cards are collected from the focus group participants and they are posted along the wall in the session room. Next, the researcher facilitated a discussion in which the focus group participants are asked to clarify the meaning of each card on the wall. The silent brainstorming session ended after the group engaged in an inductive coding process, where the group silently organized the cards into groups that represent themes prescribed by the focus group participants.

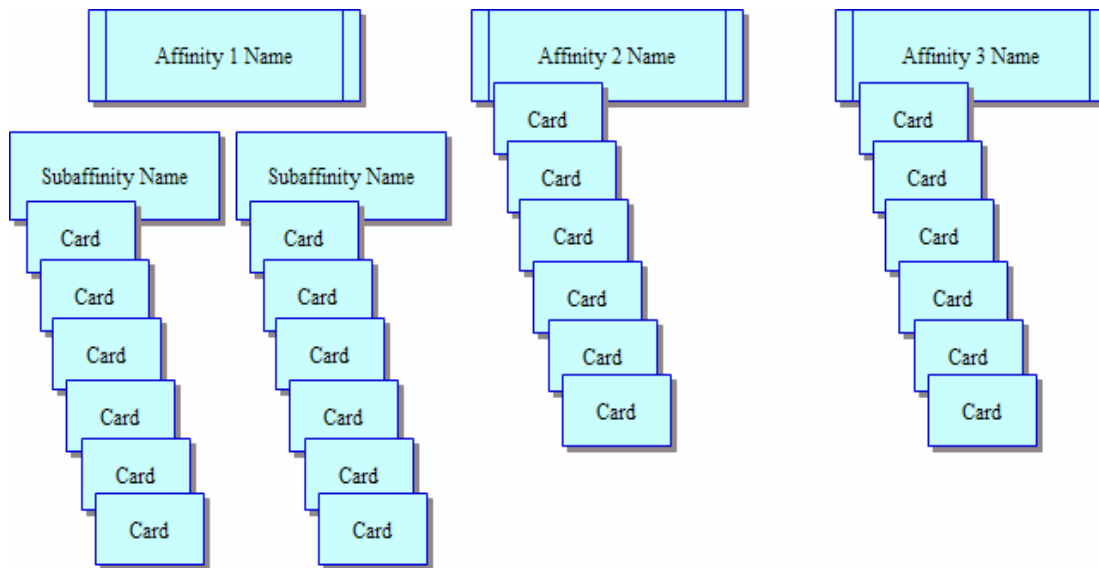
The IQA research flow employs both a deductive (general to specific) and inductive (specific to general) approach to a qualitative research technique. The deductive and inductive approach at this stage of the process helped to generate a system of axial codes to represent the groups' perception of the phenomenon they experience. The axial coding process seeks to name, reorganize, clarify, and refine the affinities through a series of questions that prompt the focus group participants to examine the phenomenon.

Focus Group Data Analysis

In this study, the focus group participants included 20 African American male community college students selected by the researcher and/or campus administrator. Axial coding is the process by which the

focus group participants examine the range of meaning for each of the affinities that describe their first-semester experience at a community college. Figure 3.1 provides a visual description of the facilitator used to help the focus group participants identify, label, and categorize the affinities (factors) they chose:

Figure 3.1: Axial Coding Process



After index cards are grouped by the affinities into a hierarchical system, the researcher facilitated the development of the affinity (major constructs) is divided into three sub-affinities (minor constructs). The labeling of the affinities and the sub-affinities speaks the study participants' perception of the relationships among the factors that influenced their first-year experience at their particular college.

The final stage of the focus group activities were guided by a set of open-ended interview questions adapted from the *MetLife Foundation on Student Success Focus Group Moderator Toolkit* set the tone for the focus group discussion. The questions selected from the moderator toolkit queried the study participants on their first-semester experience at their particular college. During the question and interview session, the study participations provided insight on the types of academic and social programs and services they were engaged in during their first-semester of their first academic term.

The Individual Interviews

The researcher also conducted in-depth individual interviews with 3 African American male community college students who were selected by the college senior administrative. The research study participants were asked the same set of questions used during the two focus group sessions (Appendix H). This process allowed the researcher to engage in a more in-depth discussion with the African American male study respondents, which led to an even richer data set.

The individual interviews varied in length of time from 30 to 40 minutes. The audio recordings of the interviews allowed the researcher to capture more accurate data and it is more reliable than handwriting the notes or relying on memory (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). After the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the interview results and coded the results according to the themes derived from the focus group sessions. This coding process allowed the researcher to capture a set of common related themes based on students' overall perception of their first-semester experience.

Research Study Setting

The researcher conducted two focus group and three individual interview sessions with a total of 25 male students who were first-year students at a community college during the 2007-2008 and the 2008-2009 academic years. To recruit participant for the focus group sessions, the researcher posted announcements regarding the date and time of the focus group activities on campus, at the two community colleges selected for this research study (Appendix B).

The first focus group session was conducted on June 25, 2008 with seven African American male students who enrolled at their community college during the fall of 2007. Participants for the first focus group session were recruited by the senior administrative staff in the Student Services Office. Most of the participants who participated in this session were actively enrolled in the *African American Male Students Success Course*, at their community college, during the fall of 2007.

The second focus group was conducted on September 25, 2008 with 17 male community college students who were currently enrolled in an *American Male Students Success Course* at their community

college. Initially, the researcher extended the invitation to African American male students enrolled in the community college's *African American Male Students Success Course* during the fall 2008. With permission from the faculty member, the focus group sessions was held during the regularly scheduled class time and this class included first-year male students from varying racial and ethnic persuasions. As a result, the second focus group session included four Caucasian and three Hispanic students in the course, who asked to remain in the classroom to participate in second focus group sessions. The responses from both student groups were coded and eliminated from the transcribed student narratives presented in this chapter.

The individual interview sessions were conducted on September 9, 2008, with three African American male community college students who are actively involved in the African American male programs and initiatives at their college. The participants for the individual interview sessions were comprised of student volunteers who responded to the invitation announcement and from recommendations made by the Vice President of Student Development at the community college.

Chapter Summary

The contents of this chapter described the methodology process used to collect, analyze and process the data collected during this research study. The next chapter will provide a detailed description of the data that resulted from the focus group and individual interview sessions. The qualitative data is organized by the affinities (major themes) and the sub affinities (minor themes), established by the focus group participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This objective of this study was to examine the educational experiences of entering African American male students at two community colleges in the State of Texas. The two community colleges selected for this study offer specialized programs and services to African American male students. Both institutions were in the process of expanding their African American male programs to include males from every ethnic group. As previously noted, the series of research questions developed for this study were tested using a three methodological approach—survey research, case-study analysis, and qualitative research. This three-phased approach allowed for triangulation of the research findings, whereas the quantitative and qualitative nature of the research methodology helped researcher focus attention on the similarities and differences among the research findings.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant difference in the engagement levels among first-year male community college students by age group?
2. From the African American male students' perspective, what are the specific educational programs and institutional practices that improved their retention and persistence during the first three weeks of enrollment in a community college?
3. In the case of the African American male students, what organizational and institutional factors influenced their decision to enroll for a second semester at a community college?

Phase One: The 2007 Sense Pilot Survey Findings

The 2007 *SENSE* survey provided detailed quantitative data from student respondents' perspective of what happened during the first few weeks of enrollment at their community college. The 2007 *SENSE* survey is administered during the fourth and fifth weeks of the 2007 fall academic term in

courses most likely to enroll entering students. To answer research question one, the researcher relied on the secondary data collected during the *2007 Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)* pilot survey.

The main content of the *2007 SENSE* instrument represents student behaviors that are highly correlated with many desirable learning and personal development outcomes for first-year college students. Responding to the questionnaire required students to reflect on what they are putting into and getting out of their first-semester college experience. In keeping with the themes derived from the focus group and interview activities, the researcher selected and arranged questions from the *2007 SENSE* survey in this format:

1. Academic and Social Integration

- a. Student-Staff Interaction

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 14n and 19c

- b. Student-Faculty Interaction

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 14p, 16e, 16f, and 19b

- c. Student-Student Interaction

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 14o, 19a

2. Student Engagement

- a. Student-Faculty Engagement

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 17i and 17j

- b. Student-Student Engagement

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 17e and 17f

3. Entering Processes

- a. College Campus Culture:

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 16a

- b. College Admissions and Registration:

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 16b

c. College Placement Testing

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 14b and 14d

d. College Academic Advising and Planning

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 18a-1 and 18a-2

e. College Financial Aid Advising

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 18f-2 and 18f-3

4. Educational Interventions

a. Student Learning Communities

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 15c

b. Student Orientation Programs

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 13a, 13b, 13c, 13d, and 13e

c. Student Success Courses

SENSE Pilot Survey Questions: 15b

The variable labels assigned to each item in the question set were based on the *2007 SENSE Data Codebook* authored by *CCSSE*, the *SENSE* survey administrator. For the purpose of this study, the questions a complete listing of the question set including the variable coding process are included in Appendix A. The next section of this chapter will summarize the results for the questions selected to engage the study participants in the focus group and individual interview discussions.

Academic and Social Integration

The first set of survey questions selected from the *2007 SENSE* survey data related to academic and social integration. The survey questions evaluated in this section addressed how the male respondents interacted with administrative staff, faculty, and other students. To determine if there are statistically significant differences between the African American male respondents and males from other groups, the

researcher used *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)* to produce a three-part quantitative analysis.

First, the researcher calculated the frequency statistics to summarize the responses given by all (781) African American male respondents, for each question related to academic and social integration. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) among the responses given by the 781 African American males by age group. During the final stage of the statistical analysis, the researcher utilized the effect size to interpret the strength of association among the found in the one-way ANOVA results. The Eta-Squared value greater than .20 marked as statistically significant.

Student-to-Staff Interaction

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated at least one college staff member new their name by the end of the first week of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.1 a majority (51%) of the African American male respondents indicated at least one college staff member knew their name by the end of the first week of their first academic term. The results of the frequency statistical calculations for the 781 African American male responses are listed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Frequency Statistics for Student-to-Staff Interaction [Item 14n]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: At least one college staff member knew my name

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	386	49.4	50.5	50.5
	No	323	41.4	42.3	92.8
	Do Not Recall	45	5.8	5.9	98.7
	N/A	10	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	764	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	17	2.2		
Total		781	100.0		

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine how the African American male respondents viewed the quality of their relationships with administrative and office personnel at their college, during the first three weeks of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.2 a majority (30%) of the African American male respondents indicated the administrative personnel and office staff were helpful, considerate, and flexible. The results of the frequency statistical calculations for the 781 African American male responses are listed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Frequency Statistics for Student-to-Staff Interaction [Item 19c]

Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Your relationship with: Administrative Personnel & Offices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unhelpful, inconsiderate, rigid	30	3.8	3.9	3.9
	Response 2	17	2.2	2.2	6.2
	Response 3	45	5.8	5.9	12.1
	Response 4	123	15.7	16.2	28.3
	Response 5	150	19.2	19.7	48.0
	Response 6	170	21.8	22.4	70.4
	Helpful, considerate, flexible	225	28.8	29.6	100.0
	Total	760	97.3	100.0	
Missing	System	21	2.7		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by African American male respondents with regard to the following question: *(1) This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: At least one college staff member knew my name and (2) Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Administrative Personnel & Offices.* The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) listed in Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for Student-to-Staff Interaction [Items 14n and 19c]

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : At least one college staff member knew my name	18 to 19	344	1.57	.648	.035	1.50	1.64
	20 to 21	153	1.58	.685	.055	1.47	1.69
	22 to 24	93	1.62	.736	.076	1.47	1.78
	25 to 29	62	1.55	.694	.088	1.37	1.72
	30 to 39	57	1.63	.616	.082	1.47	1.80
	40 to 49	27	1.41	.501	.096	1.21	1.61
	50 to 64	15	1.47	.516	.133	1.18	1.75
	65+	2	2.00	.000	.000	2.00	2.00
	Total	753	1.58	.660	.024	1.53	1.62
Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Administrative Personnel & Offices	18 to 19	344	5.29	1.544	.083	5.13	5.46
	20 to 21	153	5.36	1.520	.123	5.12	5.60
	22 to 24	92	5.13	1.619	.169	4.80	5.47
	25 to 29	59	5.31	1.653	.215	4.87	5.74
	30 to 39	57	5.28	1.925	.255	4.77	5.79
	40 to 49	28	5.79	1.686	.319	5.13	6.44
	50 to 64	15	6.07	1.163	.300	5.42	6.71
	65+	1	1.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	749	5.32	1.596	.058	5.20	5.43

Table 4.4: One-Way ANOVA for Student-to-Staff Interaction [Items 14n and 19c]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> . At least one college staff member knew my name	Between Groups	1.750	7	.250	.571	.780	.005
	Within Groups	326.110	745	.438			
	Total	327.859	752				
Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> . Your relationship with: Administrative Personnel & Offices	Between Groups	36.965	7	5.281	2.094	.042	.019
	Within Groups	1868.674	741	2.522			
	Total	1905.640	748				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the first question: *This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. At least one college staff member knew my name* were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7,745) = .571$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 40 to 49 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.41$). Entering and returning African American male respondents 65 years of age or older had the highest mean score ($M=2.00$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .005; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA (African American Male Respondents) associated with the second question: *Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Administrative Personnel & Offices*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 741) = 2.09$, $p < .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the 65 years of age or older had the

lowest mean score ($M=1.00$). Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 50 to 64 had the highest mean score ($M=6.07$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .019; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Student-to-Faculty Interaction

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated at least one faculty member knew their name by the end of the first week of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.5 a majority (54%) of the African American male respondents indicated at least one faculty member knew their name by the end of the first week of their first academic term. The results of the frequency statistical calculations for the 781 African American male responses are listed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Frequency Statistics for Student-to-Faculty Interaction [Item 14p]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: At least one faculty member knew my name

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	411	52.6	53.9	53.9
	No	298	38.2	39.1	92.9
	Do Not Recall	43	5.5	5.6	98.6
	N/A	11	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	763	97.7	100.0	
Missing	System	18	2.3		
Total		781	100.0		

Frequency statistics were calculated to quantify African American male respondents' perception of their relationships with their college instructors. As illustrated in Table 4.6 a majority (34%) of the African American male respondents indicated their college instructors were available, helpful, and sympathetic. The results of the frequency statistical calculations for the 781 African American male responses are listed in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Frequency Statistics for Student-to-Faculty Interaction [Item 19b]

Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with:
Instructors

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unavailable, Unsupportive, Unsympathetic	14	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Response 2	15	1.9	2.0	3.8
	Response 3	22	2.8	2.9	6.7
	Response 4	100	12.8	13.2	19.9
	Response 5	167	21.4	22.0	41.8
	Response 6	183	23.4	24.1	65.9
	Available, Helpful, Sympathetic	259	33.2	34.1	100.0
	Total	760	97.3	100.0	
Missing	System	21	2.7		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following question: *(1) This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: At least one faculty member knew my name and (2) Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Instructors.* The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are listed in Tables 4.7 and 4.8.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics for Student-to-Faculty Interaction [Item 14p and 19b]

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : At least one faculty member knew my name	18 to 19	343	1.57	.688	.037	1.50	1.64
	20 to 21	151	1.44	.573	.047	1.35	1.54
	22 to 24	94	1.69	.804	.083	1.53	1.86
	25 to 29	62	1.53	.646	.082	1.37	1.70
	30 to 39	58	1.52	.655	.086	1.34	1.69
	40 to 49	27	1.37	.492	.095	1.18	1.57
	50 to 64	15	1.47	.516	.133	1.18	1.75
	65+	2	2.00	.000	.000	2.00	2.00
	Total	752	1.55	.669	.024	1.50	1.59
Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Instructors	18 to 19	343	5.51	1.408	.076	5.36	5.66
	20 to 21	153	5.69	1.363	.110	5.48	5.91
	22 to 24	92	5.52	1.338	.140	5.24	5.80
	25 to 29	61	5.62	1.392	.178	5.27	5.98
	30 to 39	57	5.82	1.627	.216	5.39	6.26
	40 to 49	27	6.11	1.188	.229	5.64	6.58
	50 to 64	15	5.80	1.265	.327	5.10	6.50
	65+	1	1.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	749	5.60	1.408	.051	5.50	5.70

Table 4.8: One-Way ANOVA for Student-to-Faculty Interaction [Items 14p and 19b]

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : At least one faculty member knew my name	Between Groups	5.190	7	.741	1.665	.114	.015
	Within Groups	331.273	744	.445			
	Total	336.463	751				
Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Instructors	Between Groups	36.358	7	5.194	2.660	.010	.025
	Within Groups	1446.873	741	1.953			
	Total	1483.231	748				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the first question: *This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: At least one faculty member knew my name*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 744) = 1.67$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 40 to 49 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.37$). Entering and returning African American male respondents age 65 or older had the highest mean score ($M=1.00$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .015; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR*

FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Instructors, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 741) = 2.66, p < .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between age 65 or older had the lowest mean score ($M=1.00$). Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages 40 to 49 had the highest mean score ($M=6.11$). The strength of (η^2) was .025; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Accessibility of College Faculty and Staff

Frequency statistics were calculated to quantify African American male respondents' perception of their interaction with college faculty and staff. As illustrated in Table 4.9 a majority (41%) of the African American male respondents indicated they could go to a college faculty or staff member with questions regarding to matters related to their coursework.

Table 4.9: Frequency Statistics for Accessibility to College Faculty and Staff [Item 16e]

To respond, please think about experiences had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns related to my coursework.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	224	28.7	29.3	29.3
	Agree	319	40.8	41.7	71.0
	Neutral	152	19.5	19.9	90.8
	Disagree	38	4.9	5.0	95.8
	Strongly Disagree	10	1.3	1.3	97.1
	Do Not Recall	22	2.8	2.9	100.0
	Total	765	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	16	2.0		
Total		781	100.0		

Frequency statistics were calculated to quantify African American male respondents' perception of their interaction with college faculty and staff. As illustrated in Table 4.10 a majority (35%) of the African American male respondents indicated they were neutral and did not have an opinion on the accessibility of college faculty and staff members with regard to matters unrelated to their coursework.

Table 4.10: Frequency Statistics for Accessibility of College Faculty and Staff [Item 16f]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns about matters unrelated to my coursework

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	112	14.3	14.6	14.6
	Agree	174	22.3	22.7	37.4
	Neutral	271	34.7	35.4	72.8
	Disagree	107	13.7	14.0	86.8
	Strongly Disagree	43	5.5	5.6	92.4
	Do Not Recall	58	7.4	7.6	100.0
	Total	765	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	16	2.0		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following question: (1) *I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns related to my coursework*, and (2) *I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns about matters unrelated to my coursework*. The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are listed in Tables 4.11 and 4.12.

Table 4.11: Descriptive Statistics for Accessibility of College Faculty and Staff [Items 16e and 16f]

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
To respond, please think about experiences had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns related to my coursework	18 to 19	345	2.22	1.107	.060	2.11	2.34
	20 to 21	153	2.19	1.207	.098	2.00	2.38
	22 to 24	94	2.15	1.126	.116	1.92	2.38
	25 to 29	61	2.08	1.159	.148	1.79	2.38
	30 to 39	59	1.83	.931	.121	1.59	2.07
	40 to 49	25	2.12	.971	.194	1.72	2.52
	50 to 64	15	1.93	1.033	.267	1.36	2.51
	65+	2	4.00	1.414	1.000	-8.71	16.71
	Total	754	2.16	1.122	.041	2.08	2.24
To respond, please think about experiences had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns about matters <u>unrelated</u> to my coursework	18 to 19	344	2.93	1.365	.074	2.79	3.08
	20 to 21	153	2.96	1.376	.111	2.74	3.18
	22 to 24	95	2.97	1.433	.147	2.68	3.26
	25 to 29	61	3.02	1.360	.174	2.67	3.36
	30 to 39	59	3.05	1.345	.175	2.70	3.40
	40 to 49	27	2.81	1.331	.256	2.29	3.34
	50 to 64	14	2.79	1.051	.281	2.18	3.39
	65+	2	3.50	2.121	1.500	-15.56	22.56
	Total	755	2.95	1.364	.050	2.86	3.05

Table 4.12: One-Way ANOVA for Accessibility of College Faculty and Staff [Items 16e and 16f]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences <u>at this college</u> . To respond, please think about experiences had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns <u>related</u> to my coursework	Between Groups	15.881	7	2.269	1.817	.081	.017
	Within Groups	931.701	746	1.249			
	Total	947.582	753				
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences <u>at this college</u> . To respond, please think about experiences had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns about matters <u>unrelated</u> to my coursework	Between Groups	2.483	7	.355	.189	.988	.002
	Within Groups	1400.894	747	1.875			
	Total	1403.377	754				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns related to my coursework*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 746) = 1.82$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 30 to 39 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.83$). Entering and returning African American male respondents age 65 or older had the highest mean score ($M=4.00$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .017; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the first question: *This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences had BY THE END OF*

THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns about matters unrelated to my coursework, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 747) = .189, p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 50 to 64 had the lowest mean score ($M=2.79$). Entering and returning African American male respondents between the age 65 or older had the highest mean score ($M=3.50$). The strength of (η^2) was .002; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Student-to-Student Interaction

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated at least one student whom they did not know knew their name by the end of the first week of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.13, a majority (61%) of the African American male respondents indicated at least one student whom they did not know previously knew their name by the end of the first week of their first academic term.

Table 4.13: Frequency Statistics for Student-to-Student Interaction [Item 14o]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: At least one other student (whom I did not previously know) knew my name

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	466	59.7	60.8	60.8
	No	259	33.2	33.8	94.6
	Do Not Recall	33	4.2	4.3	99.0
	N/A	8	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	766	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	15	1.9		
Total		781	100.0		

Frequency statistics were calculated to quantify African American male respondents' perception of their relationships with other students during the first three week of their first academic term. As

illustrated in Table 4.14, a majority (31%) of the African American male respondents indicated their relationships with other students were friendly and supportive and they shared a sense of belonging.

Table 4.14: Frequency Statistics for Student-to-Student Interaction [Item 19a]

Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Your relationship with: Other Students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation	21	2.7	2.8	2.8
	Response 2	13	1.7	1.7	4.5
	Response 3	33	4.2	4.3	8.8
	Response 4	122	15.6	16.0	24.8
	Response 5	180	23.0	23.7	48.5
	Response 6	156	20.0	20.5	69.0
	Friendly, supportive, sense of belonging	236	30.2	31.0	100.0
	Total	761	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	2.6		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following question: *(1) This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: At least one other student (whom I did not previously know) knew my name and (2) Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Other Students.* The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are listed in Tables 4.15 and 4.16.

Table 4.15: Descriptive Statistics for Student-to-Student Interaction [Item 14o and 19a]

					95% Confidence Interval for Mean		
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences <u>at this college</u> . To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : At least one other student (whom I did not previously know) knew my name	18 to 19	342	1.47	.648	.035	1.40	1.54
	20 to 21	154	1.38	.551	.044	1.30	1.47
	22 to 24	95	1.56	.768	.079	1.40	1.71
	25 to 29	62	1.42	.529	.067	1.28	1.55
	30 to 39	58	1.41	.531	.070	1.27	1.55
	40 to 49	27	1.52	.700	.135	1.24	1.80
	50 to 64	15	1.40	.507	.131	1.12	1.68
	65+	2	1.50	.707	.500	-4.85	7.85
	Total	755	1.45	.628	.023	1.41	1.50
Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> . Your relationship with: Other Students	18 to 19	345	5.51	1.385	.075	5.36	5.65
	20 to 21	153	5.34	1.479	.120	5.10	5.58
	22 to 24	92	5.35	1.478	.154	5.04	5.65
	25 to 29	60	5.15	1.706	.220	4.71	5.59
	30 to 39	56	5.34	1.761	.235	4.87	5.81
	40 to 49	28	5.71	1.357	.256	5.19	6.24
	50 to 64	15	6.00	1.309	.338	5.27	6.73
	65+	1	1.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	750	5.42	1.481	.054	5.32	5.53

Table 4.16: One-Way ANOVA for Student-to-Student Interaction [Item 14o and 19a]

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences <u>at this college</u> . To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : At least one other student (whom I did not previously know) knew my name	Between Groups	2.193	7	.313	.793	.593	.007
	Within Groups	294.980	747	.395			
	Total	297.174	754				
Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : Your relationship with: Other Students	Between Groups	35.822	7	5.117	2.362	.022	.022
	Within Groups	1607.346	742	2.166			
	Total	1643.168	749				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the first question: *This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: At least one other student (whom I did not previously know) knew my name*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 747) = .793$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 20 to 21 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.38$). Entering and returning African American male respondents ages 22 to 24 the highest mean score ($M=1.56$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .007; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Other Students*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 742) = 2.36$, $p < .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents age 65 or older had the lowest mean score ($M=1.00$). Entering and returning African American

male respondents ages 50 to 64 the highest mean score ($M=6.00$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .022; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Student Engagement

The survey questions selected from the 2007 *SENSE* survey data related to student engagement. This series of survey questions evaluated in this section addressed how engaged the male respondents were with faculty and other students. To determine if there are statistically significant differences between the African American male respondents and males from other groups, the researcher used *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) to produce a three-part quantitative analysis.

First, the researcher calculated the frequency statistics to summarize the responses given by all (781) African American male respondents for each question related to student engagement. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) among the responses given by African American male (781) by age group. During the final stage of the statistical analysis, the researcher utilized the effect size to interpret the strength of association among the found in the one-way ANOVA results. The Eta-Squared value greater than .20 marked as statistically significant.

Student-to-Faculty Engagement

Frequency statistics were calculated to identify African American male respondents' perception of the number of times they discussed an assignment or a grade with an instructor, during the first week of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.17 a majority (35%) of the African American male respondents indicated they discussed an assignment or grade with an instructor, on several occasions, during the first three weeks of their first academic term.

Table 4.17: Frequency Statistics for Student-to-Faculty Engagement [Item 17i]

During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not At All	188	24.1	24.5	24.5
	Once	231	29.6	30.1	54.6
	Several Times	271	34.7	35.3	89.8
	At Least Weekly	56	7.2	7.3	97.1
	Do Not Recall	22	2.8	2.9	100.0
	Total	768	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	13	1.7		
Total		781	100.0		

Frequency statistics were calculated to identify African American male respondents' perception of the number of times they discussed ideas from readings or classes with an instructor during the first week of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.18, a majority (54%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not discuss ideas from readings or classes with an instructor during the first three weeks of their first academic term.

Table 4.18: Frequency Statistics for Student-to-Faculty Engagement [Item 17j]

During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not At All	411	52.6	53.6	53.6
	Once	150	19.2	19.6	73.1
	Several Times	141	18.1	18.4	91.5
	At Least Weekly	21	2.7	2.7	94.3
	Do Not Recall	44	5.6	5.7	100.0
	Total	767	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	14	1.8		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following questions: (1) *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor* and (2) *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class*. The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for both questions are listed in Tables 4.19 and 4.20.

Table 4.19: Descriptive Statistics for Student-to-Faculty Engagement [Item 17i and 17j]

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean					
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> , how often did you do the following: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor	18 to 19	346	2.22	.994	.053	2.11	2.32
	20 to 21	156	2.45	1.024	.082	2.29	2.61
	22 to 24	94	2.62	.996	.103	2.41	2.82
	25 to 29	61	2.34	1.063	.136	2.07	2.62
	30 to 39	57	2.42	1.068	.141	2.14	2.70
	40 to 49	27	2.37	1.079	.208	1.94	2.80
	50 to 64	15	2.27	.884	.228	1.78	2.76
	65+	1	3.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	757	2.35	1.018	.037	2.27	2.42
During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> , how often did you do the following: Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class	18 to 19	347	1.73	1.099	.059	1.62	1.85
	20 to 21	156	2.06	1.225	.098	1.86	2.25
	22 to 24	94	2.06	1.134	.117	1.83	2.30
	25 to 29	61	1.97	1.125	.144	1.68	2.26
	30 to 39	56	1.66	1.116	.149	1.36	1.96
	40 to 49	28	2.43	1.476	.279	1.86	3.00
	50 to 64	13	1.77	.927	.257	1.21	2.33
	65+	1	3.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	756	1.88	1.158	.042	1.80	1.97

Table 4.20: One-Way ANOVA for Student-to-Faculty Engagement [Items 17i and 17j]

		Sum of		Mean			
		Squares	df	Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> , how often did you do the following: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor	Between Groups	15.187	7	2.170	2.115	.040	.019
	Within Groups	768.440	749	1.026			
	Total	783.627	756				
During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> , how often did you do the following: Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class	Between Groups	28.398	7	4.057	3.086	.003	.028
	Within Groups	983.359	748	1.315			
	Total	1011.757	755				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the first question: *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 749) = 2.12$, $p < .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 18 to 19 had the lowest mean score ($M=2.22$). Entering and returning African American male respondents 65 years of age and older had the highest mean score ($M=.3.00$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .019; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 748) = 3.09$, $p < .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 30 to 39 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.66$). Entering and returning African American male respondents 65 years of age or older had the highest mean score ($M=3.00$). The strength of the effect size (Eta^2) was .028; therefore, it was statistically significant. The strength of (Eta^2) was .028; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Student-to-Student Engagement

Frequency statistics were calculated to identify African American male respondents' perception of how often they worked with other students on a project in class during the first three weeks of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.21 a majority (43%) of the African American male respondents indicated on several occasions, they worked other students on a project in class, during the first three weeks of their first academic term.

Table 4.21: Frequency Statistics for Student-to-Student Engagement [Item 17e]

During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Work with other students on a project during class

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not At All	152	19.5	19.6	19.6
	Once	205	26.2	26.5	46.1
	Several Times	331	42.4	42.8	88.9
	At Least Weekly	50	6.4	6.5	95.3
	Do Not Recall	36	4.6	4.7	100.0
	Total	774	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	7	.9		

Frequency statistics were calculated to identify African American male respondents' perception of how often they worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments, during the first three weeks of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.22 a majority (52%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not work with classmates to prepare class assignments during the first three weeks of their first academic term.

Table 4.22: Frequency Statistics for Student-to-Student Engagement [Item 17f]

During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not At All	400	51.2	51.9	51.9
	Once	146	18.7	18.9	70.8
	Several Times	169	21.6	21.9	92.7
	At Least Weekly	26	3.3	3.4	96.1
	Do Not Recall	30	3.8	3.9	100.0
	Total	771	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	10	1.3		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following question: (1) *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments* and (2) *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Work with other students on a project during class*. The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are listed in Tables 4.23 and 4.24.

Table 4.23: Descriptive Statistics for Student-to-Student Engagement [Items 17e and 17f]

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	18 to 19	349	1.78	1.059	.057	1.66	1.89
	20 to 21	155	2.02	1.159	.093	1.84	2.20
	22 to 24	94	1.98	1.209	.125	1.73	2.23
	25 to 29	61	1.90	.943	.121	1.66	2.14
	30 to 39	57	1.95	1.093	.145	1.66	2.24
	40 to 49	28	2.04	1.036	.196	1.63	2.44
	50 to 64	15	1.73	1.163	.300	1.09	2.38
	65+	1	3.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	760	1.88	1.096	.040	1.81	1.96
During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Work with other students on a project during class	18 to 19	350	2.39	1.090	.058	2.27	2.50
	20 to 21	156	2.57	.997	.080	2.41	2.73
	22 to 24	95	2.58	1.006	.103	2.37	2.78
	25 to 29	61	2.43	.903	.116	2.19	2.66
	30 to 39	57	2.77	.907	.120	2.53	3.01
	40 to 49	28	2.86	.756	.143	2.56	3.15
	50 to 64	15	2.67	.976	.252	2.13	3.21
	65+	1	3.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	763	2.50	1.026	.037	2.43	2.58

Table 4.24: One-Way ANOVA for Student-to-Student Engagement [Items 17e and 17f]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> , how often did you do the following: Work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	Between Groups	10.194	7	1.456	1.215	.292	.012
	Within Groups	901.616	752	1.199			
	Total	911.811	759				
During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> , how often did you do the following: Work with other students on a project during class	Between Groups	14.716	7	2.102	2.014	.051	.018
	Within Groups	788.026	755	1.044			
	Total	802.742	762				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the first question: *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 752) = 1.22$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 50 to 64 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.73$). Entering and returning African American male respondents 65 years of age or older had the highest mean score ($M=3.00$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .012; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Work with other students on a project during class*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 755) = 2.01$, $p < .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents ages 25 to 29 had the lowest

mean score ($M=2.43$). Entering and returning African American male respondents 65 years of age or older had highest mean score ($M=3.00$). The strength of (η^2) was .018; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Entering Processes

The survey questions selected from the 2007 *SENSE* survey data related to entering process focused on five key themes: college campus culture, college placement testing, college academic advising and planning, and college financial aid processes. To determine if there are statistically significant differences between the African American male respondents and males from other groups, the researcher used *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) to produce a three-part quantitative analysis.

First, the researcher calculated the frequency statistics to summarize the responses given by all (781) African American male respondents, for each question related to entering processes. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) among the responses given by African American male (781) by age group. During the final stage of the statistical analysis, the researcher utilized the effect size to interpret the strength of association among the found in the one-way ANOVA results. The Eta-Squared value greater than .20 marked as statistically significant.

College Campus Environment

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated they felt welcomed at the college by the end of the first week of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.25, a majority (41%) of the African American male respondents strongly agreed with the statement and they felt welcomed at the college by the end of the first week of their first academic term.

Table 4.25: Frequency Statistics for College Campus Environment [Item 16a]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	193	24.7	25.1	25.1
	Agree	319	40.8	41.4	66.5
	Neutral	215	27.5	27.9	94.4
	Disagree	14	1.8	1.8	96.2
	Strongly Disagree	17	2.2	2.2	98.4
	Do Not Recall	12	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	770	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	11	1.4		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following question: *This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome.* The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the survey question related to African American male respondents' perception of their College's campus culture by age group are listed in Tables 4.26 and 4.27.

Table 4.26: Descriptive Statistics for Campus Environment [Item 16a]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
18 to 19	346	2.30	.979	.053	2.20	2.40
20 to 21	154	2.27	1.042	.084	2.10	2.43
22 to 24	94	2.05	.977	.101	1.85	2.25
25 to 29	62	2.03	1.040	.132	1.77	2.30
30 to 39	59	1.85	.847	.110	1.63	2.07
40 to 49	27	2.15	1.167	.225	1.69	2.61
50 to 64	15	1.60	.632	.163	1.25	1.95
65+	2	3.00	2.828	2.000	-22.41	28.41
Total	759	2.19	1.004	.036	2.12	2.26

Table 4.27: One-Way ANOVA for Campus Environment [Item 16a]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
Between Groups	21.930	7	3.133	3.170	.003	.029
Within Groups	742.128	751	.988			
Total	764.058	758				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the question: *The very first time I came to this college I felt welcomed*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 751) = 3.17, p < .05$. Entering and

returning African American male respondents between the ages of 50 to 64 had the lowest mean score (M=1.60). Entering and returning African American male respondents age 65 or older had the highest mean score (M=3.00). The strength of (Eta²) was .029; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results.

College Admissions and Registration

Frequency statistics were calculated to identify African American male respondents' perception of their earliest experiences with the college admissions and registration process, by the end of the first weeks of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.28, a majority (46%) of the African American male respondents agreed that they were able to access the information needed to complete the enrollment process by the end of the first week of their first academic term.

Table 4.28: Frequency Statistics for College Admissions and Registration [Item 16b]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: I was able to access the information I needed to complete the enrollment process (Admissions, registration, financial aid, etc.)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	284	36.4	37.0	37.0
	Agree	352	45.1	45.9	82.9
	Neutral	89	11.4	11.6	94.5
	Disagree	20	2.6	2.6	97.1
	Strongly Disagree	11	1.4	1.4	98.6
	Do Not Recall	11	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	767	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	14	1.8		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following question: *This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE*

FIRST WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: I was able to access the information I needed to complete the enrollment process (admissions, registration, financial aid, etc.). The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the question related to students' perception of their College's admissions, registration, financial aid and other processes by age group are listed in Tables 4.29 and 4.30.

Table 4.29: Descriptive Statistics for College Admissions and Registration [Item 16b]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: I was able to access the information I needed to complete the enrollment process (admissions, registration, financial aid, etc.).

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
18 to 19	345	1.91	.939	.051	1.81	2.01
20 to 21	153	1.92	1.038	.084	1.75	2.08
22 to 24	94	1.97	.978	.101	1.77	2.17
25 to 29	61	1.80	1.062	.136	1.53	2.08
30 to 39	59	1.85	1.047	.136	1.57	2.12
40 to 49	27	1.85	.602	.116	1.61	2.09
50 to 64	15	1.47	.516	.133	1.18	1.75
65+	2	3.50	2.121	1.500	-15.56	22.56
Total	756	1.90	.973	.035	1.83	1.97

Table 4.30: One-Way ANOVA for College Admissions and Registration [Item 16b]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: I was able to access the information I needed to complete the enrollment process (admissions, registration, financial aid, etc.).

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
Between Groups	9.262	7	1.323	1.404	.201	.013
Within Groups	705.098	748	.943			
Total	714.360	755				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the question: *I was able to access the information I needed to complete the enrollment process (admissions, registration, financial aid, etc.),* were found not to be statistically significant $F(7, 748) = 1.40, p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 50 to 64 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.47$). Entering and returning African American male respondents age 65 or older had the highest mean score ($M=3.50$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .013; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

College Placement Testing

Frequency statistics were calculated to identify the percentage of African American male respondents who took a placement test by the first weeks of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.31 a majority (84%) of the African American male respondents indicated they took a placement test by the end of the first week of their first academic term.

Table 4.31: Frequency Statistics for College Placement Testing [Item 14b]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: I took a placement test (ACT, SAT, COMPASS, ASSET, AccuPlacer, etc.)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	636	81.4	83.8	83.8
	No	83	10.6	10.9	94.7
	Do Not Recall	30	3.8	4.0	98.7
	N/A	10	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	759	97.2	100.0	
Missing	System	22	2.8		
Total		781	100.0		

Frequency statistics were calculated the percentage of African American male respondents who indicated they were exempt from taking a placement test by the end of the first week of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.32, a majority (74%) of the African American male respondents indicated they were not exempt from taking a placement test by the end of the first week of their first academic term.

Table 4.32: Frequency Statistics for College Placement Testing [Item 14d]

This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: I was exempt from taking a placement test at this college because of my test scores on previous exams or coursework

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	120	15.4	15.7	15.7
	No	565	72.3	74.1	89.9
	Do Not Recall	46	5.9	6.0	95.9
	N/A	31	4.0	4.1	100.0
	Total	762	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	19	2.4		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following questions: (1) This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: *I took a placement test (ACT, SAT, COMPASS, ASSET, AccuPlacer, etc.)* and (2) This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: *I was exempt from taking a placement test at this college because of my test scores on previous exams or coursework*. The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for both questions are listed in Tables 4.33 and 4.34.

Table 4.33: Descriptive Statistics for College Placement Testing [Items 14b and 14d]

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences <u>at this college</u> . To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : I took a placement test (ACT, SAT, COMPASS, ASSET, AccuPlacer, etc.)	18 to 19	340	1.19	.515	.028	1.13	1.24
	20 to 21	153	1.26	.626	.051	1.16	1.36
	22 to 24	95	1.31	.745	.076	1.15	1.46
	25 to 29	60	1.22	.555	.072	1.07	1.36
	30 to 39	57	1.28	.590	.078	1.12	1.44
	40 to 49	26	1.19	.491	.096	.99	1.39
	50 to 64	15	1.33	.617	.159	.99	1.68
	65+	2	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00
	Total	748	1.23	.581	.021	1.19	1.27
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences <u>at this college</u> . To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : I was exempt from taking a placement test <u>at this college</u> because of my test scores on previous exams or coursework	18 to 19	342	1.96	.556	.030	1.90	2.02
	20 to 21	153	2.00	.659	.053	1.89	2.11
	22 to 24	95	2.07	.672	.069	1.94	2.21
	25 to 29	62	1.89	.655	.083	1.72	2.05
	30 to 39	58	1.93	.672	.088	1.75	2.11
	40 to 49	26	2.12	.653	.128	1.85	2.38
	50 to 64	15	2.13	.640	.165	1.78	2.49
	65+	2	3.00	1.414	1.000	-9.71	15.71
	Total	753	1.99	.620	.023	1.94	2.03

Table 4.34: One-Way ANOVA for College Placement Testing [Items 14b and 14d]

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. Eta ²
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : I took a placement test (ACT, SAT, COMPASS, ASSET, AccuPlacer, etc.)	Between Groups	1.743	7	.249	.735	.643 .007
	Within Groups	250.707	740	.339		
	Total	252.449	747			
This set of items asks about your earliest experiences <u>at this college</u> . To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : I was exempt from taking a placement test <u>at this college</u> because of my test scores on previous exams or coursework	Between Groups	4.607	7	.658	1.725	.100 .016
	Within Groups	284.232	745	.382		
	Total	288.839	752			

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the first question: *I took a placement test (ACT, SAT, COMPASS, ASSET, AccuPlacer, etc.)*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 740) = .74$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents 65 years of age or older had the lowest mean score ($M=1.00$). Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 50 to 64 had the highest mean score ($M=1.33$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .007; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *I was exempt from taking a placement test at this college because of my test scores on previous exams or coursework*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 745) = 1.73$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 25 to 29 had the lowest mean score ($M= 1.89$). Entering and returning

African American male respondents age 65 or older had the highest mean score ($M=3.00$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .016; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

College Academic Advising and Planning

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated they were aware of the academic advising and planning services that were available at their college, by the first three weeks of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.35, a majority (77%) of the African American male respondents indicated they were aware of academic advising and planning by the first three weeks of their first academic term.

Table 4.35: Frequency Statistics for College Academic Advising and Planning [Item 18a-1]

Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Did you know about it? Academic advising/planning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	588	75.3	76.9	76.9
	No	177	22.7	23.1	100.0
	Total	765	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	16	2.0		
Total		781	100.0		

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine how often African American male respondents used the academic advising and planning services, provided by their college, during the first three weeks of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.36, a majority (35%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not use the academic advising and planning services, provided by their college, during the first three weeks of their first academic term.

Table 4.36: Frequency Statistics for College Academic Advising and Planning [Item 18a-2]

Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: How often did you use it? Academic advising/planning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not At All	259	33.2	35.2	35.2
	Once	228	29.2	31.0	66.2
	Several Times	195	25.0	26.5	92.7
	At Least Weekly	21	2.7	2.9	95.5
	Do Not Recall	33	4.2	4.5	100.0
	Total	736	94.2	100.0	
Missing	System	45	5.8		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following questions: (1) *Did you know about it? Academic advising/planning* and (2) *How often did you use it? Academic advising/planning*. The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for African American male respondents' awareness and perception of their College's admissions, registration, and financial aid process for African American male respondents, by age group, are listed in Tables 4.37 and 4.38.

Table 4.37: Descriptive Statistics for College Academic Advising and Planning [Items 18a-1 and 18a-2]

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : Did you know about it? Academic advising/planning	18 to 19	345	1.27	.444	.024	1.22	1.32
	20 to 21	155	1.21	.406	.033	1.14	1.27
	22 to 24	93	1.25	.434	.045	1.16	1.34
	25 to 29	61	1.15	.358	.046	1.06	1.24
	30 to 39	57	1.23	.423	.056	1.12	1.34
	40 to 49	28	1.07	.262	.050	.97	1.17
	50 to 64	15	1.27	.458	.118	1.01	1.52
	65+	1	1.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	755	1.23	.423	.015	1.20	1.26
Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : How often did you use it? Academic advising/planning	18 to 19	331	2.00	1.094	.060	1.88	2.12
	20 to 21	150	2.25	1.036	.085	2.08	2.41
	22 to 24	93	1.96	1.010	.105	1.75	2.16
	25 to 29	58	2.43	1.110	.146	2.14	2.72
	30 to 39	53	2.11	.913	.125	1.86	2.36
	40 to 49	25	2.44	.917	.183	2.06	2.82
	50 to 64	14	2.29	1.139	.304	1.63	2.94
	65+	1	2.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	725	2.11	1.063	.039	2.03	2.19

Table 4.38: One-Way ANOVA for College Academic Advising and Planning [Items 18a-1 and 18a-2]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : Did you know about it? Academic advising/planning	Between Groups	1.839	7	.263	1.474	.173	.014
	Within Groups	133.134	747	.178			
	Total	134.972	754				
Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : How often did you use it? Academic advising/planning	Between Groups	18.348	7	2.621	2.351	.022	.022
	Within Groups	799.260	717	1.115			
	Total	817.608	724				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the first question: *Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Did you know about it? Academic advising/planning*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 747) = 1.47$, $p > .05$. The Entering and returning African American male respondents age 65 or older had the lowest mean score ($M=1.00$). Entering and returning African American male students between the ages 50 to 64 and 18 to 19 had the highest mean score ($M=1.27$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .014; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: How often did you use it? Academic advising/planning*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 717) = 2.35$, $p < .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages 22 to 24 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.96$). Entering and returning African American male students between the ages 40 to 49 had the

highest mean score ($M=2.44$). The strength of (η^2) was .022; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results.

College Financial Aid Process

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who used the financial aid services, provided by their college, during first three weeks of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.39 a majority (42%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not use the financial aid services, provided by their colleges, during the first three weeks of their first academic term.

Table 4.39: Frequency Statistics for College Financial Aid Processes [Item 18f-2]

This section has three parts. Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: How often did you use it? Financial aid advising

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not At All	302	38.7	41.4	41.4
	Once	179	22.9	24.6	66.0
	Several Times	203	26.0	27.8	93.8
	At Least Weekly	23	2.9	3.2	97.0
	Do Not Recall	22	2.8	3.0	100.0
	Total	729	93.3	100.0	
Missing	System	52	6.7		
Total		781	100.0		

Frequency statistics were calculated to identify African American male respondents' perception of the financial aid services provided by their colleges, during the first three weeks of their first academic term. As illustrated in Table 4.40, a majority (33%) said this question did not apply to their situation.

Table 4.40: Frequency Statistics for College Financial Aid Processes [Item 18f-3]

This section has three parts. Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: How satisfied were you with it? Financial aid advising

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very	181	23.2	26.9	26.9
	Somewhat	148	19.0	22.0	48.8
	Not At All	93	11.9	13.8	62.6
	Do Not Recall	32	4.1	4.7	67.4
	N/A	220	28.2	32.6	100.0
	Total	674	86.3	100.0	
Missing	System	107	13.7		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering male respondents with regard to the following questions: (1) *This section has three parts. Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: How often did you use it? Financial aid advising* and (2) *This section has three parts. Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: How satisfied were you with it? Financial aid advising*. The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are listed in Tables 4.41 and 4.42.

Table 4.41: Descriptive Statistics for College Financial Aid Processes [Items 18f-2 and 18f-3]

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean					
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
This section has three parts. Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: How often did you use it? Financial aid advising	18 to 19	329	2.04	1.073	.059	1.93	2.16
	20 to 21	150	2.06	1.076	.088	1.89	2.23
	22 to 24	91	2.03	1.005	.105	1.82	2.24
	25 to 29	56	2.14	1.086	.145	1.85	2.43
	30 to 39	52	1.83	.901	.125	1.58	2.08
	40 to 49	25	1.60	.866	.173	1.24	1.96
	50 to 64	14	1.79	.802	.214	1.32	2.25
	65+	1	2.00	.	.	.	.
Total		718	2.02	1.044	.039	1.94	2.09
This section has three parts. Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: How satisfied were you with it? Financial aid advising	18 to 19	302	2.95	1.586	.091	2.77	3.13
	20 to 21	142	2.87	1.643	.138	2.59	3.14
	22 to 24	81	3.01	1.601	.178	2.66	3.37
	25 to 29	53	2.74	1.689	.232	2.27	3.20
	30 to 39	51	3.02	1.679	.235	2.55	3.49
	40 to 49	23	3.43	1.754	.366	2.68	4.19
	50 to 64	13	3.08	1.891	.525	1.93	4.22
	65+	1	1.00	.	.	.	.
Total		666	2.95	1.625	.063	2.82	3.07

Table 4.42: One-Way ANOVA for College Financial Aid Processes [Items 18f-2 and 18f-3]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
This section has three parts. Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : How often did you use it? Financial aid advising	Between Groups	8.377	7	1.197	1.099	.362	.011
	Within Groups	773.422	710	1.089			
	Total	781.799	717				
This section has three parts. Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : How satisfied were you with it? Financial aid advising	Between Groups	13.400	7	1.914	.723	.653	.008
	Within Groups	1742.654	658	2.648			
	Total	1756.054	665				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the first question: *This section has three parts.*

Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: How often did you use it? Financial aid advising, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 710) =$

1.10, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages 40 to 49 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.60$). Entering and returning African American male students between the ages of 25 to 29 had the highest mean score ($M=2.14$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .011; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *This section has three*

parts. Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college:

How satisfied were you with it? Financial aid advising, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 658) = .723$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents ages of 65 and older had the lowest mean score ($M=1.00$). Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 40 to 49 had the highest mean score ($M=3.43$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .008; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Educational Interventions

The survey questions selected from the 2007 *SENSE* survey data related college educational interventions focused on three key themes: student learning communities, student orientation programs, and student success courses. To determine if there are statistically significant differences between the African American male respondents and males from other groups, the researcher used *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) to produce a three-part quantitative analysis.

First, the researcher calculated the frequency statistics to summarize the responses given by all (781) African American male respondents, for each question related to student engagement. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) among the responses given by African American male (781) by age group. During the final stage of the statistical analysis, the researcher utilized the effect size to interpret the strength of association among the found in the one-way ANOVA results. The Eta-Squared value greater than .20 marked as statistically significant.

Student Learning Communities

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated if they did or did not participate in an organized learning community during the first three weeks of their first academic term at the college they attended. As illustrated in Table 4.43 a majority (92%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not participate in an organized learning community during the first three weeks of their first academic term at the college they attended.

Table 4.43: Frequency Statistics for Student Learning Communities [Item 15c]

Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Organized learning community (linked courses for a group of students)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Enrolled	62	7.9	8.7	8.7
	Not Enrolled	654	83.7	91.3	100.0
	Total	716	91.7	100.0	
Missing	System	65	8.3		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following question: *Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Organized learning community (linked courses for a group of students).* The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are listed in Tables 4.44 and 4.45.

Table 4.44: Descriptive Statistics for Student Learning Communities [Item 15c]

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : Organized learning community (linked courses for a group of students)?	18 to 19	330	1.91	.288	.016	1.88	1.94
	20 to 21	147	1.89	.313	.026	1.84	1.94
	22 to 24	87	1.90	.306	.033	1.83	1.96
	25 to 29	54	1.94	.231	.031	1.88	2.01
	30 to 39	49	1.98	.143	.020	1.94	2.02
	40 to 49	26	1.92	.272	.053	1.81	2.03
	50 to 64	12	2.00	.000	.000	2.00	2.00
	65+	1	2.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	706	1.91	.281	.011	1.89	1.93

Table 4.45: One-Way ANOVA for Student Learning Communities [Item 15c]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : Organized learning community (linked courses for a group of students)?	Between Groups	.470	7	.067	.848	.547	.001
	Within Groups	55.259	698	.079			
	Total	55.729	705				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the question: *Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Organized learning community (linked courses for a group of respondents)*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 698) = .848, p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 20 to 21 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.89$). Entering and returning African American males respondents between the ages of 50 to 64 and those age 65 or older had the highest

mean score (M=2.00). The strength of (Eta²) was .001; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Student Orientation Programs

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated if they participated in an online orientation program prior to the beginning of classes. As illustrated in Table 4.46 a majority (90%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not take part in an online orientation program prior to the beginning of classes.

Table 4.46: Frequency Statistics for Student Orientation Programs [Item 13a]

The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I took part in an online orientation prior to the beginning of classes.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Response [No]	701	89.8	89.8	89.8
	Response [Yes]	80	10.2	10.2	100.0
	Total	781	100.0	100.0	

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated if they attended an on-campus orientation program prior to the beginning of classes. As illustrated in Table 4.47, a majority (68%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not attend an on-campus orientation program prior to the beginning of classes.

Table 4.47: Frequency Statistics for Student Orientation Programs [Item 13b]

The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I attended an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Response [No]	531	68.0	68.0	68.0
	Response [Yes]	250	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	781	100.0	100.0	

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following questions: *(1) The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I took part in an online orientation prior to the beginning of classes and (2) The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I attended an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes.* The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are listed in Tables 4.48 and 4.49.

Table 4.48: Descriptive Statistics for Student Orientation Programs Items 13a and 13b]

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean					
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I took part in an online orientation prior to the beginning of classes.	18 to 19	353	.10	.299	.016	.07	.13
	20 to 21	156	.12	.321	.026	.06	.17
	22 to 24	95	.07	.263	.027	.02	.13
	25 to 29	62	.08	.275	.035	.01	.15
	30 to 39	59	.17	.378	.049	.07	.27
	40 to 49	28	.07	.262	.050	-.03	.17
	50 to 64	15	.13	.352	.091	-.06	.33
	65+	2	.00	.000	.000	.00	.00
	Total	770	.10	.304	.011	.08	.12
The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I attended an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes.	18 to 19	353	.35	.477	.025	.30	.40
	20 to 21	156	.28	.451	.036	.21	.35
	22 to 24	95	.31	.463	.047	.21	.40
	25 to 29	62	.23	.422	.054	.12	.33
	30 to 39	59	.36	.483	.063	.23	.48
	40 to 49	28	.18	.390	.074	.03	.33
	50 to 64	15	.53	.516	.133	.25	.82
	65+	2	1.00	.000	.000	1.00	1.00
	Total	770	.32	.467	.017	.29	.35

Table 4.49: One-Way ANOVA for Student Orientation Programs [Items 13a and 13b]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I took part in an online orientation prior to the beginning of classes.	Between Groups	.465	7	.066	.719	.656	.007
	Within Groups	70.429	762	.092			
	Total	70.895	769				
The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I attended an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes.	Between Groups	3.324	7	.475	2.206	.032	.020
	Within Groups	164.083	762	.215			
	Total	167.408	769				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the first question: *The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I took part in an online orientation prior to the beginning of classes*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 762) = .719$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents age 65 or older had the lowest mean score ($M=0.00$). Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 30 to 39 had the highest mean score ($M= 0.17$). The strength of (Eta²) was .007; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I took part in an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 762) = 2.21$, $p < .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 40 to 49 had the lowest mean score ($M=.18$). Entering and returning African American male respondents age 65 or older had the highest mean score ($M=1.00$). The strength of the effect size (Eta²) was .020; therefore, it was statistically significant.

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percentage of African American male respondents who indicated they were not aware of a college orientation program or course. As illustrated in Table 4.50, a marginal (21%) of the African American male respondents indicated they were not aware of a college orientation program or course.

Table 4.50: Frequency Statistics for Student Orientation Programs [Item 13d]

The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I was not aware of a college orientation program or course.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Response [Disagreed]	616	78.9	78.9	78.9
	Response [Agreed]	165	21.1	21.1	100.0
	Total	781	100.0	100.0	

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated they did not participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues. As illustrated in Table 4.51 a marginal (24%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues.

Table 4.51: Frequency Statistics for Student Orientation Programs [Item 13e]

The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Response [Disagreed]	596	76.3	76.3	76.3
	Response [Agreed]	185	23.7	23.7	100.0
	Total	781	100.0	100.0	

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following question: *The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues.* The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are listed in Tables 4.52 and 4.53.

Table 4.52: Descriptive Statistics for Student Orientation Programs [Items 13d and 13e]

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean					
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I was not aware of a college orientation program or course.	18 to 19	353	.20	.401	.021	.16	.24
	20 to 21	156	.17	.380	.030	.11	.23
	22 to 24	95	.25	.437	.045	.16	.34
	25 to 29	62	.26	.441	.056	.15	.37
	30 to 39	59	.24	.429	.056	.13	.35
	40 to 49	28	.21	.418	.079	.05	.38
	50 to 64	15	.27	.458	.118	.01	.52
	65+	2	.00	.000	.000	.00	.00
	Total	770	.21	.408	.015	.18	.24
The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues.	18 to 19	353	.21	.410	.022	.17	.26
	20 to 21	156	.28	.448	.036	.20	.35
	22 to 24	95	.23	.424	.044	.15	.32
	25 to 29	62	.29	.458	.058	.17	.41
	30 to 39	59	.22	.418	.054	.11	.33
	40 to 49	28	.32	.476	.090	.14	.51
	50 to 64	15	.13	.352	.091	-.06	.33
	65+	2	.00	.000	.000	.00	.00
	Total	770	.24	.425	.015	.21	.27

Table 4.53: One-Way ANOVA for Student Orientation Programs [Items 13d and 13e]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I was not aware of a college orientation program or course.	Between Groups	.737	7	.105	.631	.731	.006
	Within Groups	127.180	762	.167			
	Total	127.917	769				
The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues.	Between Groups	1.114	7	.159	.879	.522	.008
	Within Groups	137.868	762	.181			
	Total	138.982	769				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with first question: *I was not aware of a college orientation program or course*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7,762) = .631$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents age 65 or older had the lowest mean score ($M=.00$). Entering and returning African American male respondents between the ages of 50 to 60 had the highest mean score ($M=.27$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .006; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues*, were found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 762) = .879$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning African American male respondents 65 years of ages or older had the lowest mean score ($M=.00$). Entering and returning African American male respondents ages 40 to 49 had the highest mean score ($M=.32$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .008; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Student Orientation Courses

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated they enrolled in an orientation course as part of their course schedule during

their first academic term at their college. As illustrated in Table 4.54, a majority (86%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not enroll in an orientation course as part of their course schedule during their first academic term at their college.

Table 4.54: Frequency Statistics for Student Orientation Courses [Item 13c]

The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I enrolled in an orientation course as part of my course schedule during my first academic term at this college.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Response [No]	674	86.3	86.3	86.3
	Response [Yes]	107	13.7	13.7	100.0
	Total	781	100.0	100.0	

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering male respondents with regard to the question: *The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I enrolled in an orientation course as part of my course schedule during my first academic term at this college.* The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are listed in Tables 4.55 and 4.56.

Table 4.55: Descriptive Statistics for Student Orientation Courses [Item 13c]

The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I enrolled in an orientation course as part of my course schedule during my first academic term at this college.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
18 to 19	353	.15	.358	.019	.11	.19
20 to 21	156	.14	.349	.028	.09	.20
22 to 24	95	.09	.294	.030	.03	.15
25 to 29	62	.15	.355	.045	.05	.24
30 to 39	59	.07	.254	.033	.00	.13
40 to 49	28	.29	.460	.087	.11	.46
50 to 64	15	.13	.352	.091	-.06	.33
65+	2	.00	.000	.000	.00	.00
Total	770	.14	.346	.012	.11	.16

Table 4.56: One-Way ANOVA for Student Orientation Courses [Item 13c]

The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I enrolled in an orientation course as part of my course schedule during my first academic term at this college.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
Between Groups	1.174	7	.168	1.405	.200	.013
Within Groups	90.957	762	.119			
Total	92.131	769				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the question: *The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I enrolled in an orientation course as part of my course schedule during my first academic term at this college*, found not to be statistically significant, $F(7, 762) = 1.41$, $p > .05$. Entering and returning male respondents age 65 or older had the lowest mean score ($M=0.00$). Entering and returning male respondents between the ages of 40 to 49

had the highest mean score ($M=0.29$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .013; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

Student Success Courses

Frequency statistics were calculated to determine the percent of African American male respondents who indicated they enrolled in a student success or student development course during the first three weeks of their first academic term at their college. As illustrated in Table 4.57, the responses were split 50/50. Fifty percent of the African American male respondents indicated they were enrolled in a student success or student development course and the other 50 % indicated they were not enrolled in this type of course during the first three weeks of their first academic term at their college.

Table 4.57: Frequency Statistics for Student Success Courses [Item 15b]

Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Student success or student development course?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Enrolled	374	47.9	50.3	50.3
	Not Enrolled	370	47.4	49.7	100.0
	Total	744	95.3	100.0	
Missing System		37	4.7		
Total		781	100.0		

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the responses given by entering and returning African American male respondents with regard to the following question: *Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Student success or student development course.* The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are listed in Tables 4.58 and 4.59.

Table 4.58: Descriptive Statistics for Student Success Courses [Item 15b]

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Student success or student development course	18 to 19	341	1.45	.498	.027	1.39	1.50
	20 to 21	150	1.46	.500	.041	1.38	1.54
	22 to 24	93	1.51	.503	.052	1.40	1.61
	25 to 29	57	1.67	.476	.063	1.54	1.79
	30 to 39	52	1.63	.486	.067	1.50	1.77
	40 to 49	27	1.63	.492	.095	1.43	1.82
	50 to 64	12	1.75	.452	.131	1.46	2.04
	65+	1	2.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	733	1.50	.500	.018	1.46	1.54

Table 4.59: One-Way ANOVA for Student Success Courses [Item 15b]

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta ²
Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Student success or student development course	Between Groups	5.225	7	.746	3.040	.004	.029
	Within Groups	178.024	725	.246			
	Total	183.250	732				

Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the question: *Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Student success or student development course*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 725) = 3.04$, $p < .05$. Entering male and returning African American male respondents 18 to 19 had the lowest mean score ($M=1.45$). Entering male respondents 65 years of age or older had the highest mean score ($M=2.00$). The strength of (Eta^2) was .029; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

To sum up the findings for this phase of the research study, the researcher compiled summary tables describing the one-way ANOVA and the effect size for each question. The summary tables are organized according to the major themes are listed in Tables 4.60 to 4.63

Table 4.60: Summary of P-Value and Effect Size Value for Variables Related to Academic and Social Integration					
African American Male Respondents by Age Group (N=781)					
Related Themes	SENSE Question	Sig.	P-Value*	Eta-Squared (η^2)	Effect Size*
Student-to-Staff Interaction	At least one college staff member knew my name	.780	p > .05	.005	< .20
	Quality of relationships with people in Administrative and Personnel Offices	.042	p < .05	.019	< .20
Student-to-Faculty Interaction	At least one faculty member knew my name	.114	p < .05	.015	< .20
	Quality of relationships with instructors	.010	p < .05	.025	> .20
Accessibility of College Faculty and Staff	I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns about matters <u>unrelated</u> to my coursework	.988	p > .05	.002	< .20
	I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns about matters <u>related</u> to my coursework	1.817	p > .05	.017	< .20
Student-to-Student Interaction	At least one other student (whom I did not previously know) knew my name	.593	p > .05	.007	< .20
	Quality of relationships with other students	.022	p < .05	.022	> .20
Total Number of Statistically Significant Differences			4		2

*The shaded areas denote statistically significant differences.

The one-way ANOVA results for the *SENSE* survey items related to *Academic and Social Integration* indicated there were two items that were statistically significant different. The responses given by first-year African American male respondents with regard to: (1) *Quality of relationships with people in Administrative and Personnel Offices*, and (2) *At least one faculty member knew my name*; both had a p-value less than .05 and an effect size less than .20. Consequently, the one-way ANOVA analysis for this item, by age group, was deemed as statistically significant.

Table 4.61: Summary of P-Value and Effect Size Value for Variables Related to Student Engagement					
African American Male Respondents by Age Group (N=781)					
Related Themes	SENSE Question	Sig.	P-Value*	Eta-Squared (η^2)	Effect Size*
Student-to-Faculty Engagement	Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor	.040	p < .05	.019	< .20
	Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class	.003	p < .05	.028	> .20
Student-to-Student Engagement	Frequency of working with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	.292	p > .05	.012	< .20
	Frequency of working with other students on a project during class	.051	p = .05	.018	< .20
Total Number of Statistically Significant Differences			3		2

*The shaded areas denote statistically significant differences.

The one-way ANOVA results for the *SENSE* survey items related to *Academic and Social Integration* indicated there were two items that were statistically significant different. The responses given by first-year African American male respondents with regard to: (1) *Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor*, and (2) *Frequency of working with other students on a project during class*, had a p-value less than .05 and an effect size less than .20. Consequently, the one-way ANOVA analysis for both items, by age group, was deemed as statistically significant.

Table 4.62: Summary of P-Value and Effect Size Value for Variables Related to Entering Processes					
African American Male Respondents by Age Group (N=781)					
Related Themes	SENSE Question	Sig.	P-Value*	Eta-Squared (η^2)	Effect Size*
College Campus Environment	The very first time I came to this college I felt welcomed	.003	P < .05	.029	> .20
	I was able to access the information I needed to complete the enrollment process (admissions, registration, financial aid, etc.)	.201	P > .05	.013	< .20
College Placement Testing	I took a placement test (ACT, SAT, COMPASS, ASSET, AccuPlacer, etc.)	.643	P > .05	.007	< .20
	I was exempt from taking a placement test <u>at this college</u> because of my test scores on previous exams or coursework	.100	P > .05	.016	< .20
College Academic Advising and Planning	Did you know about Academic Advising/Planning?	.173	P > .05	.014	< .20
	How often did you use Academic Advising/Planning?	.022	P > .05	.022	> .20
College Financial Aid Processes	How often did you use Financial Aid Advising?	.362	P > .05	.012	< .20
	How satisfied were you with Financial Aid Advising?	.653	P > .05	.008	< .20
Total Number of Statistically Significant Differences			1		0

*The shaded areas denote statistically significant differences.

The one-way ANOVA results for the *SENSE* survey items related to *Student Engagement* indicated none of the items were significant different. The responses given by first-year African American male respondents with regard to: (1) *The very first time I came to this college I felt welcomed*, had a p-value less than .05 and an effect size greater than .20. Consequently, the one-way ANOVA analysis for this item, by age group, was not statistically significant.

Table 4.63: Summary of P-Value and Effect Size Value for Variables Related to Educational Interventions					
African American Male Respondents by Age Group (N=781)					
Related Themes	SENSE Question	Sig.	P-Value	Eta-Squared (η^2)	Effect Size*
Student Learning Communities	Participated in an organized learning community (linked courses for a group of students)?	.547	P > .05	.001	< .20
	I took part in online orientation prior to the beginning of class	.656	P > .05	.007	< .20
Student Orientation Programs	I attended an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes.	.032	P < .05	.020	= .20
	I enrolled in an orientation course as part of my course schedule during my first academic term at this college.	.200	P > .05	.013	< .20
	I was not aware of a college orientation program or course.	.731	P > .05	.006	< .20
	I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues.	.522	P > .05	.008	< .20
Student Orientation Courses	Enrolled in a student success or student development course during the first three weeks of enrollment	.004	P < .05	.029	> .20
Total Number of Statistically Significant Differences			2		1

The one-way ANOVA results for the *SENSE* survey items related to *Student Engagement* indicated only one item was statistically significant different. The responses given by first-year African American male respondents with regard to: (1) *I attended an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes*, had a p-value less than .05 and an effect size equal to .20. Consequently, the one-way ANOVA analysis for this item, by age group, was deemed as statistically significant.

Phase Two: Case Study Findings

Across the country, school districts have placed a strong emphasis on recruiting and retaining African American males in higher education. Most notably, community colleges across the nation are developing campus-based programs and initiatives to support minority male students who enroll in their institutions. In Texas, several community colleges have implemented pilot programs designed to help African-American males persist through their first semester of enrollment in a community college. This

section will provide details on the types of programs and services offered at the two community colleges attended by the research study participants.

Over the last few years, the two community colleges selected for this research study have initiated a variety of recruitment and retention strategies to attract African American males to community colleges, including campus-based summits and workshops, and gender-specific student success courses. Most notably, the athletic programs at one of the colleges in this study served as unofficial learning communities for entering male students. One college also implemented a student leadership and mentoring program in which the male study participants volunteered to travel with college administrators and faculty to different high schools to talk with students about the programs and services offered at their community college.

The titles of the programs were changed in order to protect the identity of the location of the college and the research study participants who volunteered to participate in the focus group and individual interview sessions. This next section provides a description of types of programs offered at the two community colleges selected for the research study, which includes the key components for the gender-specific programs offered to the African American male study participants.

African American Male Summit

The African American Male Summit is a new program that was initiated in the fall of 2008 at one of the community college study sites. The program focuses primarily on the African-American male student body at the community college. High school juniors and seniors within the college's service area were also invited to attend the male summit. The objective of the African American Male Summit is to assist African-American male students in identifying and overcoming common and significant stumbling blocks in their pathway leading toward college entrance and academic success.

The summit featured keynote presentations, with speakers addressing topics and real solutions related to strengthening family, closing the achievement gap, developing and fostering positive relationships and staying on course with one's educational goals. Male students currently enrolled at the

college were given the opportunity to help organize and facilitate the sessions that were offered at the African American Male Summit. One of the study participants served as a volunteer for the summit stated:

“I think the College’s *African American Male Summit* is going to be a good experience for me. I am here on campus so much and I am always looking for positive ways to be involved on campus. I think the *African American Male Summit* will give me a chance to be involved in a huge initiative at the College. Being involved in the planning stages of the *African American Male Summit* is a motivator for me.”

This program was facilitated by a committee that included members from the community, college senior-level administrators, faculty, and staff. The committee membership also included an African American male student from the student body.

African American Male Students Success Course

The mission of *The African American Male Student Success Course* is to promote success for male students enrolled in the community college. Initially the course was established for first-year African American male student enrolled at the community college, but by popular demand from other male students on campus, the course is open to any male student enrolled at the college. The primary goal of *The African American Male Student Success Course* is to provide academic, leadership, social, moral and cultural enrichment activities for male students. This is done through a core curriculum which centers on personal and social issues that are unique to male college students. Students enrolled in this course are provided the opportunity to participate in intramural sports programs, a student leadership institute, and academic and social activities.

The goal of *The African American Male Student Success Course* is to link male student participants with mentors and ‘dream coaches’ who help develop their academic and social skills. During the weekly schedule class times, students participate in motivational workshops, seminars, and career counseling sessions. The textbooks used in the student success course focus on student success and human development. Students enrolled in the course are also required to complete a service learning or community service project.

Intercollegiate and Intramural Sports Programs

Many of the study participants indicated they enrolled in the community college so they could play sports or because they were recruited by one of the coaches at the community college. This section will describe some of the recruitment and retention activities the organizers of the campus-based intercollegiate and intramural programs implemented to help male students persist beyond their first semester of enrollment. The intercollegiate and intramural sports program at both the community colleges in this study includes both a formal and informal student advising component which helped the male students navigate successfully through the enrollment process at the college. One African American male study participant indicated:

“Our baseball coaches are advisors too, so they basically helped us enroll in classes. My coach, who was also my academic advisor, helped me enroll in classes.”

For some of the study participants, being involved in the intercollegiate sports programs on campus helped them to stay motivated beyond their first semester of enrollment. One study participant stated:

“My college coach took me all around campus and he helped me get all my stuff together for school. He also took me around to all the different offices on campus and told me about each office on campus and where to go for help with some of the problems I may have during the semester.”

Another student mentioned his athletic coach required him to enroll in the student success course for male students and he was glad he enrolled in the course.

The campus intramural sports program college also provided an opportunity for every student, faculty or staff member to participate in organized recreational competition. Structured leagues and tournaments are offered in a variety of sports activities to male students who are interested in playing on a team. Some of the study participants indicated their participation in campus intramural sports programs and other sport-related activities on campus made them feel a part of the college community:

“This college is like another home for me. I spend a lot of time here, I play basketball here and I work here on campus. I lift weights here and meet with my friends here. The college is sort of like a place where all the action is...it’s like another home for me.”

Student Leadership and Mentoring Programs

The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program is a leadership and networking program for African-American male students and it was initiated as a peer counseling and mediation program which was designed to teach students about community outreach. The primary goal of this program is to initiate motivation, provide cultural enrichment, supply academic and personal counseling to African American male students enrolled at the community college. The program was designed to provide academic mentorship that leads to excellence in the development of individual behaviors and promotes academic and personal success among minority male students enrolled in the college.

This program also focuses on several key student recruitment and retention strategies by increasing the transfer rate to four-year colleges and universities, improving self-esteem and coping strategies, and developing enterprise and leadership skills among the male students who participate in the program. The students who participate in this program are encouraged to achieve academic success through high levels of involvement in the college’s high school recruitment program and through scheduled interaction with senior-level administrators, college faculty and staff.

One of the study participants, a member of the Student Leadership and Mentoring Program at their college, commented on the positive interactions he has had as a result of being involved in the program:

“The advisors really planted the seed and encouraged me to get involved in activities on campus. With *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program* we volunteer 50 hours during the semester. You can either work on campus or go to different schools and malls to talk with kids about enrolling in the college. As a *Student Leadership and Mentoring Program* volunteer you are eligible to receive a \$350 scholarship that you can use toward clothing or books for school. It’s a way for us to give back to the community and earn a scholarship for school.”

The next section of this chapter will discuss the results of the Interactive Quantitative Analysis phase of the research study.

Phase Three: Qualitative Data Findings

To explore the African American male students' perception of their first semester college experience, the final two research questions provided the foundation for the qualitative portion of the research study:

2. From the African American male students' perspective, what are the specific educational programs and institutional practices that supported their retention and persistence during the first semester of enrollment in a two-year institution?
3. In the case of the African American male students, what organizational and institutional factors influenced their decision to enroll for a second semester at a two-year institution?

The findings from the focus group and individual interview sessions with African American male community college students are worthwhile to examine because of the implications for community college leaders and researchers as they are developing effective recruitment and retention strategies for African American men.

Using a modified version of the *Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA)* research methodology, this phase of the study relied on qualitative data collected from the focus group and interviews sessions held at two community colleges selected for the research study. Each of the focus group and interview participants were asked to sign an informed consent before at the onset of each IQA session (Appendix C). The demographic data of the participants was collected at the onset of each focus group and individual interview session, using student data forms collected from the focus group and interview participants at the beginning of each session (Appendix D).

Focus Group and Interview Questions

A two-part focus group moderator technique was used to encourage a rich data set during the focus group and interview sessions. First, the researcher initiated a silent brainstorming session during the

focus group session to encourage responses from each individual study participant. This technique was used to develop the major themes and sub categories. Next, the researcher asked a specific set of questions in order to gain insight on the first-semester experience of the focus group participants.

The questions adapted from the *MetLife Foundation on Student Success-Starting Right Focus Group Moderator Toolkit* question database helped the researcher drawn upon the “front-door experiences” for African American males at community colleges. The sequence of questions used during the focus group and individual interviews focused on five outcomes as prescribed in the *2007-2008 MetLife Foundation on Student Success Focus Group Moderator Toolkit*:

1. To better understand what students expect from higher education and how their earliest experiences compare with their expectations,
2. To understand what potential barriers to student success might lead to new students dropping during the first college term,
3. To understand students’ earliest experiences with the college and how those either motivate or discourage them in their efforts to succeed in college,
4. To understand what factors might remove or ease potential barriers to early student success; and
5. To understand how new students perceive the college’s effectiveness in meeting their needs.

A qualitative focus group and individual interview were used to determine to identify the factors (affinities and sub-affinities) that influence persistence among first-year experience for African American men in a community college setting.

The data collected from the two community colleges provided a broad data set to which the researcher could compare and contrast the perceptions of African American male students who attended community colleges in both a rural and urban setting. Comparisons of the major themes and sub-categories from the focus group sessions and the individual interview yielded four common themes. The major themes that were common among the focus group and individual interview sessions are discussed in this section.

Qualitative Data Summary

To summarize the focus group and individual interview results, a composite description of each affinity as described by the study participants was created. The following description of the four affinities identified by the study participants represents the study participants' collective perception of the specific educational programs and institutional practices that improved their retention and persistence during the first three weeks of enrollment at a community college. The affinities identified by the focus group and individual interview participants included: (1) academic and social integration, (2) entering processes, (3) educational interventions, and (4) internal factors, (5) aspiration, motivations, inspiration, and (6) recommendations from the study respondents.

Academic and Social Integration

This affinity refers to the male respondents' perception of the level of engagement and interaction with administrative staff, faculty, and other students. This affinity is divided into three sub-affinities: student-to-staff interaction, student-to-faculty interaction, and student-to-student interaction. The level of interaction for each sub-affinity speaks the study participants' perception of their interaction and engagement within each group.

Student-to-Staff Interaction

*Several students felt the staff working at the front counter and reception areas were difficult and unsupportive, and their behavior had a negative impact on their first-day college experience. “**When I came to enroll in this college the person at the front desk was not too nice, and it gave me a bad attitude for the rest of the day.** I was standing in line waiting and the secretary at the front desk asked me, ‘Are you in line!’ and ‘What are you waiting on!’ She basically ruined my morning. When you start the morning off with people yelling at you like that it can basically ruin your whole day. After that experience, it was all down hill for me and the rest of my day was ruined.”*

Some students received assistance and motivational support from senior level administrators on campus, and they felt their relationships with the staff helped them succeed during their first few weeks of

college. **“On the first day of class, I met the Vice President of Student Development, Mr. _____. He is a very smart person and he usually is very blunt but in a good way. He will tell you like it is, and what you need to do. He has been very helpful to me and he is more of a friend to me. He will be there for you whenever you need him.** Also, meeting some of the college staff, like the advisors on campus who are very helpful made my first week of college a lot better. I would say the staff at this college was very, very helpful. Before I started hanging with other students who worked in the Student Services Office, I did not know anything about the activities on campus. I find out everything that goes on campus because Ms. _____ [the advisor in the Student Services Office] tells me about the activities and programs on campus. Anytime I see Ms. _____ [the senior coordinator of the Student Services Program] she always tells me what is going on campus.”

Some students felt they need to take the initiative and reach out to the college staff, and the students who did had positive results when they nurtured relationship with college advisors, counselors, and staff. **“I feel that most of the staff members are helpful, but you have to go and talk with them and let them know when you need help. How would they [advisors and counselors] know if you need help if you keep walking around pretending you do not have a worry in the world or you do not need help? You have to go in and talk with the advisors and counselors and they will help you to the best of their ability--if you ask. Usually, if they cannot help, they will find some one who can help you.** Sometimes I feel the staff can be unhelpful and inconsiderate—not all of them though. I can honestly say there is one or two on campus who may be unhelpful. For the most part the College personnel do try to help us find the answers to questions we ask. The administrative staff and college personnel are very helpful. If you need anything they are there for you. When you need advice, they are there for you. They make themselves very available to you.”

Some students found the information they need for the admissions and registration process online and called the registration office for additional information. While some students met with the advisors or counseling staff in a face-to-face setting on campus. **“I actually learned about the steps to apply for**

admissions and registration online and from the staff here on campus. At first, I went online to look up what I needed to do to get into college. I found information about the process for registration online. I spoke to the college staff on the telephone to ask for the other information I needed to register. I used a little bit of both, online information and information from the college staff, by telephone. I met with the counselors and advisors on campus. The people in the Admissions Office pointed out different programs and courses. They talked to me about registering for classes and some of the events on campus. I was not really active in trying to get to know the students or the workers at school, so I did everything on my own. I filled out the application and registered for classes online.”

Student-to-Faculty Interaction

Students felt their interaction with faculty was important and some students had positive interactions with college faculty. **“Knowing your professors will help you out in the long run. In high school I was not always on good terms with my teachers, but when I got to college I tried to change things around. Now, I really try hard to get to know my college professors.** Anytime I see my music teacher on campus or off campus, she will always ask me if I am still doing the things she taught me in class to improve my vocal skills. During the summer, the music teachers keep track of our phone numbers, just in case we want to attend private vocal lessons or summer classes. This keeps me motivated and interested in school. I have a mentor/mentee relationship with one of my professors at the community college. I have taken his Spanish class, and he always gives me advice on how to be successful in college. He has also shared his insights on how it is to be a professor, and now I am interested in being a college professor. My Spanish teacher and I basically talk about my career goals and what it is like to be a college professor. We also talk about the cultural differences that exist between native Spanish speaking student and those who learn Spanish in school. I have a Spanish class with this teacher and usually I will stay after class to talk with him about different school things. I wanted to get to know my teachers, so I started meeting with them in their office to let them know what was going on with me and how they could help me with some of the problems I was having with my class work. Once I started going to the math lab and

meeting with my teachers. They started checking on me and taking an interest in how I was doing in school. Once my name was out there and people started to take more interest in me, and I felt more confident in school. The best teachers were those who were consistent, everyday. They had a syllabus at the beginning of the semester and their syllabus did not change. Their attitude did not change, no matter how bad their day was going. When they entered the class they were ready to teach. When they finished teaching you, you were ready to take the test. They were just consistent, good teachers. So far, I have only had three teachers like that here. Mr. _____ [my English] is a good teacher. He would go around and make sure you understood. And if you did not, he would help right then and there. If you put forth an effort he would take that into consideration. I was having a problem understanding some of the material in class, but I was afraid to ask those dumb questions. This hurt me in the long run, because they would ask you if you need help and if you understand. I really did not understand and I did not know what was going on but I was afraid to ask questions.”

College faculty advised students and helped them set their academic goals. **“With setting academic goals, I actually had a lot of help from my developmental math and developmental English teachers. They helped me set up a plan and they talked to me about the courses I should take after the developmental classes.** They also talked to me about the things I need to stay in school and complete my associate’s degree. I am still debating on my major but for now I have decided to work on completing an Associate of Science degree.”

Some students felt they needed to take the initiative and reach out to the college faculty and when they did; they had positive results when they nurtured relationship with college faculty. **“I try to meet with my teachers after class, at least once a week to talk with them about my assignments and my goals. I think it’s important for my teachers to know what I am trying to accomplish. I think that communication with my teachers really helps at the end of the semester when it is time to grade. I really think one-on-one communication works better for me. I wanted to get to know my teachers, so I started meeting with them in their office to let them know what was going on with me and how they could**

help me with some of the problems I was having with my class work. Once I started going to the math lab and meeting with my teachers, they started checking on me and taking an interest in me and they would ask me how I was doing in school. Once my name was out there and people started to take more interest in me, I felt more confident in school. Sometimes my teachers will meet with me at Barnes and Nobles to tutor me. And it feels good to know that they are willing to meet with me on their own time to tutor me and give me extra help. One-on-one conversations work better for me, but email and text messages are also helpful. My teachers mostly communicate with me through email. For me, face-to-face meetings work best for me. I like talking with people in person. Usually, I will stop by their office during their office hours, outside of class. I also try to meet with my teachers after class and I try to meet with them at least once a week to talk with them about my assignments and my goals. I think it is important for my teachers to know what I am trying to accomplish. That communication with my teachers really helps at the end of the semester.”

*Students enrolled in the African American Male Students Success Courses and programs felt their interaction with college faculty was helpful and supportive. “Mr. _____, the teacher I had for **The African American Student Success Course** is easy to talk to. Even if you bring personal things in class, he will allow you to discuss it and he will offer advice so that everyone can benefit from the experience. For example, we have talked to him about our experiences with girls or other people on campus. With Mr. _____, you can talk to him about anything. My math teacher, Ms. _____, who is also a college advisor, has helped me and several other students in her class study for math. Right now she is helping us plan an *African American Male Summit*. At the community college there are a lot of people who are willing to help you when you need help. Aside from the tutors in the learning center there are also mentors on campus who offer to help you to get through the hard stuff. *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program* is one organization I decided to join. This program is an African American male group on campus, and basically we have organized a group of African American males who are willing to attend different meetings at high schools in the area to discuss what it is like to attend the community college. We also help to recruit African American males from the local high schools to the community*

college. Dr. _____ [the Vice President of Student Development] and the College President, Dr. _____, are our advisors for *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program*. Dr. _____ and several other college staff members have helped me to understand that they too had a rough start in school but they managed to become successful black men in society, and well known people in the city where we live. I look at them and see that it is possible because they also started out at a community college, but they ended up going to Division I Colleges and it actually helped them out, so I knew that if they could do it I could do it also.”

Some students indicated they did not have the financial means to purchase their books during the first week of classes and they felt their situation had a negative effect on their initial relationship with faculty. “My professor, Ms. _____ [my developmental reading teacher], knew my first name on the first week of class because I was the only person in class who did not have a book. Everyone in the class had a book but me, so I sort of stood out in class. She remembered my name and she knew who I was by the second day of class, mainly because I did not have my book. My English Literature teacher knew the campus bookstore did not have any more books for the class, but she still gave us a lot of work in that class. There were 12 people in my class that did not have a book because the books were on back order—the bookstore had not ordered the books yet. The people in the [campus] bookstore even gave us a slip to take to class to let her know that we could not buy a book because they were on back order. I gave the teacher the slip and she told me she was still going to give me a zero for the assignments I did not turn in. She was mean and she acted like it was my fault that I did not have my book. She also gave me a zero on one of the quizzes. This semester I was having hard time finding money to pay for my books. I went to my teacher to ask her if I can make up some of the assignments I missed from the first week of class, since I did not have a book at that time. She told me I could not make up any work. I felt that she was wrong because she did not know my situation. I am poor—I could be homeless—anything, but she did not want to work with me. She did not let anyone make up any work—even if you did have a good excuse.”

Some students felt the college faculty was not helpful and unavailable. “I have had some professors

who are helpful and supportive but I have also had some who were not helpful and unavailable. So far, I have had two professors who were not very supportive because they had their own lives and they were always traveling. Many of those teachers are always dismissing class and I actually did not do well in those two classes. The professors that are always in class and always trying to help the students on campus are more reliable and their support has helped me in the long run. I would say that a lot of the teachers are available. Sometimes the teachers may say their office hours are from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. but if you stop by around 3:45p.m., they may not be in their office. I think teachers should be in their office during the time they say they have office hours. If a teacher says they will be in their office from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. they should be in their office for the full hour. I would have to say, that most teachers are in their office during their office hours, and only few of them are not. The professors I have had will give you their contact information and their office hours. They also invite you to stop by their office to talk with them. In class some of the teachers had activities like icebreakers, where students in class would have to introduce themselves to the class. This was helpful because it changed the mood in the class and it relieved some of the tension that is usually there on the first day of class. We had an icebreaker activity in almost every class. The teachers also encouraged us to recruit class partners and ask our classmates for their telephone numbers. These helped a lot of us open up to each other and make friends in class.”

Student-to-Student Interaction

Many students felt they had positive relationships with other students on campus and networking with other students made their earliest college experiences more rewarding. **“The more people you know on campus, the more fun you can have. Networking on campus is important it helps you get to know people who can help you out. I feel the students at the college are more friendly and supportive.** At high school the environment is a little different because the people that want to go to college are in college now and they are more focused. In college everyone is helpful and supportive because everyone is here for the same reason to finish school, to get a college degree, to earn a good living. At this community college there’s a good mixture of students. I feel that most every student on campus is supportive. Everyone is

trying to get somewhere, so we all try to help each other out. The students at the college are very friendly and supportive. At the end of the first week here, the first people to know my name were probably the students who sat next to me in my classes. After that and as time went by, I started introducing myself to people, because I knew it was important get to know people. When I first came to the college, one of the first people I met was another student who played flag football at the college. He was pretty cool. When I joined the flag football team I met a lot of people and they are really cool.”

Some students felt faculty encouraged the students to interact with each other during the first few weeks of class. “The most positive thing about the classes at this college was the teachers and how they encouraged the students to get to know one another during the first week of class. Some of the teachers I had made everyone in class talk with each other, so they could learn something about each person in the class. This was a positive experience because it made us more comfortable with each other in class. In one of my classes, we had to learn how to introduce ourselves to other people. It also made it easier to ask to talk with each other. I thought this activity was better than spending all our time reading and going to class with people we do not know. I think that activity made it easier for us to work together and set up study groups.”

Entering Processes

This affinity refers to the male respondents’ perception of the entering processes on their college campus. This affinity is divided into five sub-affinities: the college campus environment, the college admissions and registration process, college placement testing, college academic advising and planning, and the college financial aid process. The level of interaction for each sub-affinity speaks to the study participants’ perception of the colleges’ entering processes and how those processes affect their persistence.

College Campus Environment

Students who participated in an organized sports or music program felt the campus environment was nurturing and welcoming. Several students felt the community college environment was like home and it was a place where they were given a second chance. “This college is like another home for me. I spend

a lot of time here, I play basketball here and I work here on campus. I lift weights here and meet with my friends here. The college is sort of like a place where all the action is...it is like another home for me. I also had positive experiences with my music teachers. Being in the music program at the community college is like being in a real close family. The music teachers will set aside time for you to come to them and talk about anything. If you have questions about the syllabus they will sit down with you and help you. If you are enthused about a certain subject and they do not know how to help you, they will find someone who can help you. The music teachers will also loan you books that you can read through to help you practice and learn to play your instrument better. This college is like a home. For the simple fact that you are going to have good and bad times, just like you do at home. I mean, in a home you have a lot of hands on support and it is the same way at the community college; there is also hands on support. At home there's no fraud—there is honesty. At the community college it is the same way, the people here are honest. They tell it is going to be hard, but you can do it. This community college is like a second chance. The reason why I say that is because a lot of the big public universities do not give you a second chance when you mess up. I mean you can get a second chance at a university, but it is hard. At the community college you can get a second chance and you can go from being with a 1.0 G.P.A. to someone with a 3.8 G.P.A. easily. I say this college is like a home because I have been here for the past two years and I know everyone on campus. It is nice to be in a place where people actually remember your name and they try to get to know who you are and what you want to do with your life. They are kind of like family and that makes the college feel like home. Being on campus and seeing all the people that I grew up with, made college more comfortable. I graduated when I was 16 years old so I felt more comfortable knowing I was in college with people I already knew from high school.”

Some students did not feel the campus environment was very welcoming, and several students feel they are being singled out by the campus police officers. “This college is like a high school ‘hell hole.’ It is a place where anyone focused on learning is looked at like an idiot. The people here are judgmental and they pre-judge you. They assume you are not here to go to school and they treat you like you are an

outsider. Well for me or us [black males] on campus, we are harassed by the police on the campus, everyday. I feel like they are always watching everything we do. We could be sitting outside on campus waiting for our classes to start and you will notice the campus police are there watching us and trying to find us doing something wrong. One time I got pulled over by the campus police in the parking lot. On that day I had a test and the female police officer pulled me over because my inspection sticker was expired. I was late for a test in class, because the police office pulled me over to write me a ticket for an expired inspection sticker. I knew my sticker had expired, but I do not think the campus police should be concerned with that kind of stuff. I feel like they stopped me because I was a black student. I feel like that campus police officer was singling me out on purpose. I get harassed by the campus police, too. I am harassed by police because I drive a car that makes me look poor—it is raggedy. The police will often follow me around campus, until they have time to run my license plate. When they are done, they usually speed around me and move on to something else. For me, when the campus police see you in a small group, they do not bother you, especially if the group is a mixture people from different races. But if the campus police see you in a group of 2-3 black people or more, they tell you to move to another area. When we move to another area, they tell us to move again. The campus police usually walk around campus and if you are in a large group—especially a group of black males—they will tell the group they cannot sit or stand in certain places. Even if you are sitting in an area where other students are allowed to sit and you are quiet they come by and ask you if you are skipping class, or if you go to school here. Sometimes they will ask you if you have a copy of your class schedule. You could be doing your homework and sitting quietly, and they [campus police] will come by and ask you to leave campus if you do not have a class. They [the campus police] keep harassing us. I have had issues with the campus police before too. When that happens on campus, I take it back to racial profiling. I have this problem even when I am off campus. One time I was being picked up from school by my grandmother and the campus police gave her a hard time while she was waiting in her car. She was driving a high-end car and they gave her a hard time by asking her a lot of questions. I think they [the campus police] just have a problem with young black men. One thing that

bothers me the most is every time the campus police ask us questions about something that happened on campus, they will always start by asking my full name and if I go to school here. Every time the campus police see me on campus, they collect all my information again—every time something happens on campus.”

During registration periods, the students felt the college did well with advertising and spreading the word about college programs, workshops, and special events. “During registration times there are tables set up with flyers and information to help students. I also like the signs that are posted in the restroom stalls. A lot of posters in the restroom stalls are very appealing and they catch your eye, so you cannot help but read them. The information on the campus flyers is helpful and a lot of times they have information about things I did not know about. On this campus, there are posters and flyers are everywhere, on the elevators, in the hallways.”

College Admissions and Registration Process

Students who registered late had a hard time navigating the admissions and registration with the process. “During the admissions process, it was sort of like a ‘man-eat-man’ situation and it was kind of hard going through that process. Unfortunately, I waited until the last minute to register for classes and this made the process more hectic. The admissions process was hectic for me because I registered late and there were a lot of people in line for the same reason. I think it would have been a little bit better if I had enrolled in classes earlier. After I got everything off the ground, and I got pass the admissions process, everyone seemed more helpful and concerned. The admissions process was harder for me because I waited to register for classes in August and classes started in August. On this campus there are two quite atrocious secretaries who work at the Admissions Office front desk.”

Students who participated in athletic programs had additional support from their coaches during the admissions and registration process. “Our baseball coaches are advisors too, so they basically helped us enroll in classes. My coach is also my academic advisor helped me enroll in classes.” For

some of the study participants, being involved in the intercollegiate sports programs on campus helped them to stay motivated beyond their first semester of enrollment.”

Students who participated in high school recruitment programs were able to navigate through the admissions and registration process successfully. “When I was a senior in high school, I worked in the Counselor’s Office at my high school, there I learned about registering for college and what I needed to do to enroll in classes. I visited the college during my senior year in high school and I talked with the college counselor about admissions and how to register for classes. I attended the sessions hosted by the community college that when I was in high school.”

When applying and registering for classes, some students relied on secondary information from family and friends. “A friend from my church graduated from this college. When it was time for me to register for college, she helped me with all the paper work and walked me through the admissions process. I learned a lot from my sister who attends a university. She gave me a lot of information about what to do to register for classes. I got a lot of that information from my friends, but mainly from the counselors in the Admissions building.”

Some students met with a college advisor or a counselor before they registered for classes. “Before I registered, I met with a counselor first, then an advisor to make sure I registered for the right classes. During registration, I did not know how to register for classes. One of the counselors sat down with me and showed me how to register for my classes and looked them up online to see if they were offered during the right time. The advisors make sure I had the right classes for my degree plan. After I took the placement test, I met with an advisor and she helped me map out a plan for my studies.”

Some students registered without any guidance. “During the registration process, I pretty much registered on my own. I did not meet with anyone on that day. When I registered, I already knew what I had to take, so I registered on my own.”

College Placement Testing

The student's perception of college placement tests was at times negative and they felt the test was just another barrier they had to overcome. Some students felt the math section of the placement test was difficult even if they completed higher levels of math in high school. "I had to take developmental math and I was surprised about the results. I did not think I would have to take developmental math classes, but I had to take two developmental math classes. I was surprised because I took pre-calculus in high school. I do not do well on tests, so I had to take all developmental classes. The math part of the test was hard. I did not feel like taking the math part of the test. It was early in the morning and I was sleepy. To be honest I just started circling answers on the test because I was tired and I did not feel like taking the test. I did the other parts of the test, but when I got to the math part, I decided I did not feel like doing that stuff. I did not really try to answer all the math questions, so I was not really surprised about the results. I took the ACCUPLACER test, but I was exempt from most of it, except for the math. I had high TAKS scores, even on the math part of the test. With the ACCUPLACER test though, it seems like the college is trying to get more money out of you by making you take more classes. When I took the retest and I gave the same answers to the same questions on the test and I got a better score on the test, so there something wrong with the ACCUPLACER test. It's like false advertising—it is a scheme. Another reason why I do not feel the ACCUPLACER test is a fair test is my developmental math teacher asked me why I was even in her developmental class. She did not feel like I needed to be in the class. For example, I spent most of my time helping the other students in class, but they [the college staff] would not let me test out of the developmental math class. I thought it was crap that I had to spend the whole semester in a class that I did not need. That was also true for me too. My developmental teacher would also ask me "why are you in this class?" She also noticed I was making 100's on all the math tests and I was the only one who answered all the questions in class."

Several students were not pleased with their college placement results and they felt they should have received a higher score on the test because they had taken higher levels of math in high school.

“When I took the *ACCUPLACER* test I did well on everything, but math. I came from a pretty good high school so I thought I would have done better. I took the test right after I graduated from high school. I do not feel like I forget how to do math, but I missed the test by a few points, and I had to take developmental math. I also think they [the college] just wanted to take my money by making pay to take a developmental math class. I had to take developmental math. I already knew the stuff the teacher taught us in class, so I did not pay attention in class. I really did not focus in class because I was bored. In the developmental math class, it felt like I was taking high school Algebra again. In high school I took a lot of math classes and I finished pre-calculus. Having to take algebra and pre-algebra classes again in college, was a little upsetting to me. But after I finished the classes, I realized it was probably better for me because I did not know as much about algebra as I thought I did. I was actually glad I had to take the developmental classes because they prepared me for the other core math classes. In high school I took a lot of math classes and I finished pre-calculus. Having to take algebra and pre-algebra classes again in college, was a little upsetting to me. But after I finished the classes, I realized it was probably better for me because I did not know as much about algebra as I thought I did. I was actually glad I had to take the developmental classes because they prepared me for the other core math classes.”

Some students felt they were not prepared to take the college placement test and felt they should have been told the implications if they did not “pass” the test. “If I had known the test would ask those kinds of questions I would have prepared for the test. I was upset about the test results and having to take the developmental classes. We all had to take the *ACCUPLACER* test. I got tricked though. I did not know the test would ask me so many detailed questions, especially on the math part. I did not expect to have questions about math slopes and equations. I had to take the *COMPASS* and the *THEA* test. For me personally, the time we were given to take the *THEA* test was too short. I did not have enough time to complete the test, so I took the *COMPASS* test to try to make a better score, and that did not make a difference. I ended up having to take remedial classes for the last three semesters. The remedial classes helped me get to the level where I needed to be for college.”

College Academic Advising and Planning

Some students did not consult with an academic counselor or advisor prior to enrolling in classes.

“When I was ready to choose the courses for my major, I looked up the information online [on the college web site]. After I finish my basic courses, I plan to transfer to the university. I also looked up the degree plan for the university online to find out which courses I needed to transfer. I sat down with my academic advisor to map out a plan to finish the classes I needed to finish here before I transfer to a university. I did declare a major here at the community college—Business Management. Of course, I need to finish my core courses before I can get into my major. I actually plan on transferring to a university without the associate’s degree here at the community college. I do not feel my college advisor helped me at all. I was really young and I did not know which classes I should take my first semester in college, so I stacked up a lot of hard classes during my first semester. No one told me to take an elective to lighten the load. During my first semester, I registered for math, English, history, biology, and psychology—in one semester—and I did not take any electives. My course load caught up with me and I had to get a job, so my first semester of college was really hard. I think the college advisors should have been more helpful. I only met with the counselor during the registration process. Those were the only people who provided one-on-one service during registration.”

Some students feel the advising office was not helpful. **“During my first visit to the Advising Office, the first person who helped me tried to rush me out of his office, and he really did not help me with my questions. When it comes to registering for classes there is one person I request to speak to in the Advising Office because no one else is really as helpful as the person I usually go to for advice and it is really frustrating.** As far as advisors go, I did have an advisor that was having difficulty navigating the system and he did not know how to help me. He tried to go online to help me find the classes I needed to register for and he was on the wrong web page. I tried to be as respectful as I could, but I told him ‘Sir, that’s not the right web page, that’s the catalog.’ When I told him he was on the wrong web page, he got frustrated with me. Then I told him I wanted to transfer courses from the university I attended to the

community college and I could tell he did not know what to do. This meant that I spent 30 minutes in his office learning something I already knew and I did not get the help I needed. That was irritating. When it comes to advising, I ask for the same two people in the Advising Office who have helped me personally.”

College Financial Aid Process

Some students did not apply for financial aid because they were sure they would not qualify for financial assistance. While several students felt the Financial Aid Office is not effective in communicating deadlines and eligibility. “I feel like there was a miscommunication about the financial aid deadlines, because they do not tell you the exact deadlines dates for applying for financial aid. Even when you turn the paperwork in, no one in the Financial Aid office will help you look over the paperwork to make sure it correct before you leave the office. I did not really interact with the people in the Financial Aid Office because I did not think I would qualify for financial aid, at the time. I had a bad experience with the college staff in the Financial Aid Office. Even when you turn the paperwork in, no one in the Financial Aid office will help you look over the paperwork to make sure it is correct before you leave the office. The Financial Aid office staff will tell you to bring in all your paper work and they tell you everything is okay. When the semester starts you think everything should be good and in order, but when you check your financial aid status on e-campus, there are notices that show you have things missing in your financial aid file. When you go in to the office no one will review your paperwork with you to find out if you need more paperwork before you leave the office. Basically, there was no follow up after you submit your paperwork to the Financial Aid Office, and you have to keep going back to the same office to pick up forms they should have given you the first time you went to the office to apply for financial aid. I agree, I think the people who work in the Financial Aid Office are misinformed and they do not know everything they need to know to help students. Maybe they do not have enough experience or knowledge of what they should be doing in the Financial Aid Office. The secretaries at the front desk in the Financial Aid Office are pretty difficult. “I have waited for help in the Admissions Office for two or three hours. The College needs to process my financial aid and send me my money on time. I have paid for my classes and waited for my

financial aid refund forever. They should be able to check the system and see that I have paid for my classes and send me my money back, on time. The people in the financial aid need to be taught some etiquette.”

Educational Interventions

This affinity refers to the male respondents’ perception of the educational interventions used by their colleges’ to recruit and retain first-year students. A larger part of this affinity is devoted to programs that were designed specifically for first-year African American male students. This affinity is divided into three sub-affinities: student orientation programs, student orientation courses, and student learning communities. Some of the other college services and programs are also discussed in the context of engagement among the study participants, and their perception of the quality and availability of the programs offered at their specific college.

Student Orientation Programs

Some students indicated they did not attend the campus orientation program. **“I did not attend an orientation. Most of us did not attend the orientation. I actually did not go to the orientation that was offered at the community college. I just talked with my sister about her experience at the university.** She attended school at a university and she gave me a lot of information about what I need to do at school. I did not attend the college orientation.”

Students who attended the campus orientation did not find the session helpful or necessary. Some students felt the campus orientation programs should more engaging and interactive. “I attended the orientation. I thought it was required. We did not do anything special. The orientation was in a classroom with one teacher and the teacher just talked to us about the College. The orientation was before classes started. I do not think orientation was required, but when I came to the school for orientation, I was sent to the Counselor’s office. In that office I just had a one-on-one talk with the college counselor. I came to the college, sat in a classroom, watched a slide show, and met the campus cops, and that was it. The information in the slide show was nothing that I would not have found out on my own. I attended the

required orientation but I do not know why we had to go. We did not do anything. They [the orientation speakers] asked us to introduce ourselves to people we did not know, but most of the people who were there I already knew from high school. That was kind of pointless. I attended the orientation on campus. It was long dull, boring, and uninformative. The speakers were boring and they were not very energetic, at all. I heard orientation was a waste of time, so I did not go. I remember a lot of my friends who went to different universities in the same area said “Man, our orientation was fun.” Here [at the community college] it was totally opposite. It was boring.”

Students who attended orientation programs sponsored by the college’s Male Initiative program indicated the sessions they attended were helpful, interactive and engaging. “I did participate in an orientation on campus organized by The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program. The speakers we had during the session were very engaging and we were allowed to ask questions and discuss the kind of issues we had as black male students on campus. This orientation program was facilitated by the Vice President of Student Development. At the orientation session for *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program*, we learned about the types of services that were offered on campus. We also learned about the mentor program and other activities that were available to African American male students on campus. The orientation we had at the college allowed us to be open and ask frank questions. I liked the orientation because it was interactive. We did not just sit there and listen to people talking to us about college. We were allowed to ask questions, openly. That’s where I found out about the volunteer and scholarship opportunities that were available through *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program*. After attending the orientation program, I joined *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program* at the College. I am now a volunteer for *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program* at the College and I go to the high schools to talk with students about the programs at the College. Actually, I get information about the different ways I can be involved on campus. I am going to apply for *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program* here at the college. I understand it is a program where I can volunteer to talk to students about enrolling at the community college, so I am going to apply to be a volunteer for that program. At the College I was

involved in *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program* and I also played basketball with other students on campus. I learned about those programs from my advisors and teachers, and posted [announcements] around school. The advisors really planted the seed and encouraged me to get involved in activities on campus. With *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program* we volunteer 50 hours during the semester. You can either work on campus or go to different schools and malls to talk with kids about enrolling in the College. As a *Student Leadership and Mentoring Program* volunteer you are eligible to receive a \$350 scholarship that you can use toward clothing or books for school. It is a way for us to give back to the community and earn a scholarship for school. I think the College's *Black Male Summit* is going to be a good experience for me. I am here on campus so much and I am always looking for positive ways to be involved on campus. I think the *Black Male Summit* will give me a chance to be involved in a huge initiative at the College. Being involved in the planning stages of the *Black Male Summit* is a motivator for me. The most positive experience was when the Vice President of Student Development helped me by allowing me to pay for my classes over time. He helped me set up a payment plan because I did not have all the money to pay for my classes when I registered."

Student Orientation Courses

Students enrolled a gender-specific student success course for male students; felt the course was helpful and informative. "During the [Male Initiative] class I learned that I am no different from the next man on campus. There were about 20 Black men in the [Male Initiative] class and at least 15 of us had some of the same things in common. For example, most of us grew up without a father in our life. And it is the same thing with all my friends. We all grew up without a father in our life, so we were forced to watch our mommas struggle to raise us and our siblings. I think the experience I had in the [*Male Initiative*] class made me realize that just because a person acts a certain way there's way more to them—more than what you see on the surface. The *Male Initiative* class, Mr. _____ taught was good. Being in that class made it a little easier because you start off in a class with men who have had the same experiences you have had. This made the class easier, and more comfortable. A lot of the guys that were in

that [Male Initiative] class are still my friends now. I also liked the [Male Initiative] class because it helped me feel more comfortable with talking to other people on campus and asking for help in my other classes. At first it was frustrating having all men in the [Male Initiative] class and no girls in the class, but I was glad we had all males in the class because we had a chance to talk about a lot of things men deal with.”

Student Learning Communities

A few of the students indicated they do not like working in groups, especially if it is not required.

“I do not do work in groups if I do not have to. But most of my teachers always suggest we exchange phone numbers with other people in class, but I do not like doing that. I do not like to depend on other people to get things done. When you work in groups, someone will let you down every time. I like working on my own because working in groups can be hard, especially if other people in your group do not do their part, except in a class like biology.”

Some students prefer to work in groups with other students and they felt working in groups has had a positive effect on their learning experience. **“Every class I take I always find a group of people to work with me in a group. Working in groups is easier and we should work together in some classes. We are all in this together, so we might as well help each other out.** Most of the time we do not have time to get everything done in class, so working outside of class with other people helps you get things done faster. When you work in groups you have a chance to discuss the subject with other people in class and that can help you get a better understanding. In my biology class, the teacher required us to have a study group. On the first day of class we had to join a study group and each group had to take a picture together so we all know who was assigned to what group. That helped me a lot because working in the student group helped me figure out more of the stuff I did not learn in class, and I made an A in that biology class. During my first semester in college, study groups were helpful because I forgot some of the things I learned from high school. When I was in a study group, some of the people in my study group helped me refresh my memory, especially in my science and math classes. I think study groups are

awesome when you have to work on a large project or a difficult exam. When I have a large project, I usually step outside of my comfort zone and I ask other people to form a group with me.”

Student Expectations

Many students felt their expectations for college were different from what they experienced when they arrived on campus. “I thought college would be harder, but the hardest thing about college is showing up. The teachers already have their money, and they do not really care if you show up or not. If you miss so many days you will get a failing grade anyway. My main reason for going to college is to get a better job. I make good money right now, but I would rather have a better paying job doing something I really want to do. I make a lot of money now, but I want a job where I make good money while doing the things I enjoy doing. Yes, college is different from what I expected it to be. When you watch television and different movies you get the idea that college is all about partying and you will have a field day in college. It seems like college is like a walk in the park. In real life college has a twist to it, and you have to do homework and you have to study. Doing the homework and studying is a little bit more time consuming that I thought it would be.”

Some students felt they needed a study skills course because they did not know how to study effectively and they did not know how to manage their time effectively. “In my English class, I had a teacher that was so hard. In that class we had two papers due in two days. That class was hard because the syllabus was very extensive, and I did not know how to study. Because of that, I had a hard time keeping up with the assignments on the syllabus. From that class I learned it was important to learn how to study and it is also important to read the syllabus and stay on top of your assignments from the very beginning of class. English has always been a hard subject for me. I have had to take the same English class twice because I did not know how to study for English. In the case of this teacher, I think I should have taken his class in a regular semester and not in summer school. I think the teacher should not have had so many quizzes in between the due dates for our paper assignments, especially in the summer. Taking English during the summer made the class more difficult, but that experience molded my study skills. If you can make it in a

six-week class you can definitely make it in an 18-week class. Showing up for class is the hardest thing to do, because nobody will make you go to class. I have a hard time going to class. I really do not want to go to class, especially when I do not like the teacher. Turning in work and managing my workload at school causes me the most stress. Right now I am taking six classes and I am working really hard to get the work done for all six classes. Just meeting the teacher's quotas can be hard. Turing in six to eight page papers and completing my biology labs is sometimes hard to manage. Just turning in my work on time can be hard at times. I think I should probably set aside a certain amount of time to work on each subject every week. I think the college can help me learn more about how to manage my time. I am taking 19 hours and working part time. I decided to take 19 hours this semester because I feel like I fell behind in school my first year here and I need to catch up. I am taking classes four days a week. I am also taking a class on Saturday and an eight week class in October of this semester. I know it will all work out.”

Aspiration, Inspiration, Motivation

This affinity refers to the male respondents' personal motivations and aspiration, specifically the factors that influenced: their college choice, the decision to enroll in a community college, and the possibility of returning to the community college for a second semester. *College choice* refers to the internal and external factors that motivated and inspired each study participant to enroll in a community college. *Decision to attend college* refers to the internal and external factors that motivated the student to enroll in a community college. *Decision to return to college* refers to the internal and external factors that motivated the student to return to the community college for a second semester. *Family support* refers to the students perception of the level of support they have from the people closest to you – spouse, partner, parents, children, employers, friends, roommates, others.

The external factors are associated with the personal issues, obligations, and support systems the students may or may not have had that are the outside the institution. The internal factors are associated with programs and activities within the institution that engage and motivate the student to stay in the college.

College Choice

For many students, athletics and other organized campus activities including music programs were the reason they chose to enroll in their college. Other students chose the community college because they liked the campus environment, the smaller class sizes, proximity, and lower tuition cost. “I chose to attend this college because it was the only offer I had to play baseball. At this community college I did not have to try out for the baseball team. I could just “walked on” [sign up] and I made the team. I chose this college for the location. It’s [the college is] close to where I live and work. I work 40 hours a week and I am taking three day classes. I work at night so it is [this college is] convenient for me. The baseball coach at the College called me asked me if I wanted to play baseball for the College. I played football in high school, but I had too many concussions, so I decided to play baseball for the College, instead. I could not play football anymore and the community college was the only place I had left to play sports. I chose to go to this community college because I could play baseball. I chose this college because of the location and cost. The classes at this community college cost like one-eighth of the cost for a class at the university. I am saving a lot of money and I am close to home. For me this college was close to home. I was debating on whether I wanted to attend college. Since I did not take the SAT it was too late for me to apply to the university, so I decided to stay home and go to the community college. I chose this college because of the cost and location. The tuition at this college is cheaper and it is close to home. For me, enrolling in the community college was a last resort. I had a full ride [scholarship] to a local university. When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans; I had to choose another school. I got a partial scholarship offer from a university in New Orleans. It was about \$2,000, but that only covered the tuition cost for one semester. I still had to pay for tuition and books. It cost about \$32,000 a year to go to school at that university. Even with the scholarship I still had to pay for everything else. After I turned down the offer at the university, I heard about the [music] program at this community college. After hearing about the music program, I decided to enroll in this community college instead. Basically, attending the community college was cheaper and closer to home. I did not really want to go here [the community college] but at the last

minute I decided to stay home. I was 16 and I did not really want to leave my momma to tell you the truth. I thought it would be better for me to stay home and go to school, than to go away to college and be by myself. I felt this community college was a good move for me because the classes were cheaper and you still get the same benefits you would from a bigger college or university. Being at this community college has allowed me to mature. I also found out that I would have more one-on-one [time] with the college teachers and there was a smaller student-teacher ratio. I also heard the college teachers were able to help me with the different learning challenges I have. I chose this college because of the location. I grew up in this community and the college is close to where I live.”

Decision to Attend College

Some students indicated their decision to attend their community college was based on the advice they received from their high school counselors, community college recruiters, mentors and/or role models. Some students indicated they were motivated by the opportunity to work as a community college mentor High School Student Recruitment Program at their community college. “The High School Student Recruitment Program is a college-sponsored program, where the advisors from the college visit different high schools to talk with students about enrolling in the community college. Most of the time, the college advisors set up tables in the high school cafeteria and different representatives including current students at the community college will talk to the high school students about their experience at the community college. Being involved in the High School Student Recruitment Program at my high school opened my eyes to the opportunities I would have if I graduate from college. I also knew I did not want an average job making \$10 per hour, so I knew I would have to go to college, eventually. I had one specific counselor in high school, Ms. _____, who was really there for me, because my first two years of high school were not that great. Ms. _____ motivated me to stay in high school and she also motivated me to go to college. She motivated me in a lot of ways. “A lot of times, the Advisors from the community college would come to my high school and talk with us about the High School Student Recruitment Program at the college. One of the things I remembered from that experience

was the talks the college advisors would have about the benefits of attending the community college. In their presentations, the college advisors would emphasize the fact that the community college offered the same classes as the university. At the community college we would have more hands on interaction with the faculty and staff at the community college. My high school experience was not the best, and I knew needed more hands on support, so I decided the community college would be a good place for me to prepare for my studies at the university. I decided to go to college because I wanted to play baseball. If I had not made the baseball team here at the community college, I probably would not have signed up for classes; and I probably would have joined the Air Force, instead. When I graduated from high school, I really just wanted to work and I did not want to go to college. I got sick of having dead-end jobs. Eventually, I realized I needed a degree. My stepfather encouraged me to go back to college and it took me a while to go back, but I am back now. Since I was young, I understood if you do not have a college degree then you will not get a good job. At first, I just really wanted to go to college to play sports. I really did not care for school that much and I did not take it seriously. My environment made me want to come to school. Where I come from everyone was so negative and living the [hard] life. I wanted a better life for myself. In high school I would say that the person who urged me the most to go to college was my [athletic] coaches because playing sports was a fun thing for me and they encouraged me to go to college, so I could continue to play sports. My parents also encouraged me to go to college and they would talk to me about how important it would be to go to college. My counselors at the high school would give me different pointers and they would tell me that going to college would be the best for me. Well my motivation really did not come from my peers or family members. It really came from within me. Just seeing people who never went to college and some who never graduated from high school that motivated me to want to succeed and get a college degree. I wanted to do more than just graduate from high school. I knew I wanted to go to college and get an education and do more than my parents did. That motivated me to want to do better, and have a good life. Also, I understand that I need more than a high school diploma, so that I can provide [for my

family]. A high school diploma does not really help you get a job making 40-50 thousand per year, so you really need a college degree and you need an education to get a better paying job.”

Decision to Re-Enroll in College

Several student indicated they decided to re-enroll in their community college was influenced by internal and external factors. “The thing that influenced me the most was the difference I could see in the path that I have taken. Some of my friends who did not go to college have been living under the influence—smoking, drinking, living a fast life—and they did not mature as much as I did. Even some of the students who went to the university straight out of high school had some challenges too, some of them still ended up living a fast life. I also realized that I have saved thousands of dollars by going to the community college and I was able to improve my G.P.A. For some of my friends, going to the university right after high school has hurt them as a person because they were not mature enough. For me the community college also gave me more one-on-one interaction with my teachers. My daughter is my motivation for returning to college for a second year. I want to make a good life for her. I also feel like the activities I am involved in on campus like the *High School Student Recruitment Program* and the *African America Male Summit* help me take pride in myself and in the school, because I feel like I can take part in bringing students to the College. I also feel good because I can take part in building the reputation of College. I do not know, I am not sure I am coming back, to tell you the truth.”

Family Support

Many of the male respondents indicated they were motivated by their mothers and fathers who encouraged them to seek higher education. “Everyone in my family is supportive of my choice to go to college, especially my momma and my sister. My partners and friends are supportive of me being in school, too. I just wish more of my partners and friends were in school with me, instead of at home doing nothing. If my friends were in school with me, I would probably be more involved in school. I do not have a support system at all. I do not live with my parents, and I am not sure the community college can help me with that. I do not like school but I want to make legal money, so I am going to stay here [in college]. It

gets pretty hard especially for students who do not have family support and the money to go to college. For example, one of my friends plays sports but he does not have any money and no one is there for him. But in my case I have my dad and I have a sports scholarship, but it still has a hard time staying in school. It is hard playing school sports and going to school at the same time. My family is supportive of me and they are really supportive of me being in college. They are very supportive of me being involved in college activities because they realize they did not go to college, but they want me to succeed in college. My family does a lot to make sure I stay in school because they actually want me to graduate from college.”

Students indicated watching their parents, particularly their mother; successfully navigate through their own higher educational experiences motivated them to attend college. “For me, I saw how my mother struggled raising me and my sister. She was laid off from work a couple of times. I saw how she struggled to get that piece of paper [college degree]. I understand how important that “piece of paper” is and I know it can hold you back if you do not have that “piece of paper” [college degree]. Watching my mother struggle to make a living and go to college at the same time made me want to go to college and get a college degree. My mom went to college, and she wanted me to go to college also. She always encourages me to finish college and transfer to a four-year university, like she did. My family and friends are generally supportive, except when it comes to the time I need to spend on school work. Well out of all the people that I am close to in my family, I would have to say that my mother out of all the people. She was born in another country. When my mother came to America she sort of started off with nothing, and she worked her way up the ladder to have a good job. My mother has helped me out a lot. I am sort of a momma’s boy too; so I would have to say that my momma has made the most impact on my life. My mom is now a registered nurse. She went to school to get her associate’s degree, and I watched all the things she had to go through to finish college degree. I remember her taking a lot of different tests just to get admitted into the nursing program. She had to do it all without speaking a lot of English. Watching her motivated me to do want to better, and it made me want to do different things, like finish college. I believe my mom motivated me to want to do better in school. While I was in high school, my mother stayed on me

a lot and there were times when she wanted to give up on me when I was being stubborn and involved in the fast life—going to parties and worrying about the wrong thing. She gave me a lot of encouraging words and support to help me throughout everything. Yes, going to college is the number one thing my parents stress. My stepmother graduated from a private university in this area and she always pressed me to enroll in college. So my mom and dad stress that a lot. Really, what attracted me to the community college is the fact that the college was right across the street from my high school. I did have an older cousin who went away to college. When he would come home from college to visit us at home, we use to talk about college and the opportunities I would have if I went to college. He also encouraged me to graduate from high school and go to college. He would always tell me that I was college material and he really gave me the information I needed about college and what I needed to do to get into college. We also talked about the kinds of colleges I should attend. He was the first person in my family to graduate from college, and he would always tell me he wanted me to be the second [person to graduate from college]. He gave me some insight on college and what I needed to do to enroll in college and the kinds of grades I should be making in college.”

Some students did not believe support and understanding from others was a factor in your ability to reach their academic goals. “I do not feel I need the support from others to help me reach my goals. If you really want to finish college you will do it no matter what. You do not need other people to finish college. You have to decide you what you want to do and do it. No, I do not believe it is really that important to have a support system; I believe it is based on your personal state of mind. If you believe you can do it no one should be able to stop you from achieving your goals.”

Student Recommendations

The African-American male study participants were asked to recommend ways in which the college could improve their first-semester experience at the community college they attended. The following is a list of recommendations from the male study participants:

Entering Processes

Several students suggested that the entering process at their college need some revitalization. In particular, the admissions and registration process was too difficult to navigate, especially during peak registration times on campus. “I think the college should have more people working in the Admissions Office. They have a lot of work-study people at the front counter and they do not know how to answer a lot of our questions. We need more people in the Admissions Office and the Financial Aid Office. If you go to campus to meet with someone, you better clear your schedule for the day because you will be waiting on campus for a long time before you get the help you needed. Even if you go into an office and sign your name on the sign in sheet, you wait in line for a long time. Sometimes, you can go to class and come back, and you will still be waiting a long time before you are helped. The best thing the College could do is to hire more people who can help students make better decisions about the classes they need to take before they transfer to the university. I know it is easier said than done, but I know a lot of students on campus who take classes at random, just for the heck of it, and they end up taking the wrong classes for their degree program. Personally, I have ended up taking some classes I did not need. I am real active and involved on campus and I still ended registering for the wrong class one semester.”

Campus Programs and Services for First-Year Students

Some students suggested the college should require all first-year students to attend some type of seminar, workshop, or semester long orientation course during their first semester at the college. Other male students mentioned the college should offer courses and programs to help them develop their study skills. “The college should have more workshops or orientations sessions that require new students to attend, this may help students make better choices when it comes to selecting the right courses, to make sure they are on the right path and not wasting their time. At the end of the day when you finish your degree and you have more hours than you needed to complete the degree, you have basically wasted time and money. By having more required meetings for first-year students the college can create a win-win situation for the college and the students. I think the orientation should be mandatory

and they should be offered more than once before the semester starts. Maybe five or six orientations sessions will give students some options and the opportunity to attend a mandatory orientation session on campus. This will also allow students who have to work or have family responsibilities the chance to attend a mandatory orientation session before registration and the first day of class. First-year students usually do not know where they should go to enroll and register for classes. For this group of students, the College should put together a three-day mandatory course for freshman students. In this course they could talk to freshman about programs and services on campus. They could even quiz the students during the course to make sure they know everything about the college and where to go on campus for help. A lot of the freshman students come straight from high school, but some of them have GED diplomas and they have not been in a school setting in a while. For them, a lot of students do not know the first thing about where to go to register for classes, or where to go for help. A two-or three-day class will be good for freshman students. Even if the students do not receive college credit for the class, they need it. Maybe they could offer more classes or workshops on how to study. I do not think the College has enough people around to talk to you about what it actually means to study. Not only do students need to know how to study, but they also need to understand that choosing a class is like choosing a job. Many times, the staff will tell us that we need to study but what does that mean? We need to know how to actually study. It would be helpful if we had someone to sit with us one on one to talk with us about how studying and what it takes to successful in class. The girls here are serious about doing their work. One girl in my class is always highlighting her book and her notes in class. She even has different color highlighter for different things she wants to highlight—and she is doing all this in class. I know she has good grades, but I do not have time for that kind of stuff—highlighting everything I read in class.”

Other Campus Programs and Services

For some students, limited transportation to and from their college was also a challenge. “I know that the college does not have a bus route to the college in some areas. I was blessed with a car but some of my classmates do not have a car. Some students have to walk to school or ‘bum’ rides to school because

there is no bus route from their home to the campus. The College could probably help by setting up a bus route to help students who need to use public transportation to get to school. Especially since gas prices are increasing. Maybe they could work with the bus company to set up a bus route to the college for students. Most students at a university live on campus and they do not have the same problem, but Community College students do not live on campus and a lot of them need public transportation.”

Financial Aid

For many students having limited or no financial resources served a major barrier to their persistence and some felt the college was not sensitive to their needs in this area. “As far as financial aid, I am one of the few students who have enough money to pay for school. The college could help with setting up different scholarships to help students who do not have money to pay for school. Money should never be an issue for students who want to go to school. During the first week of college, I had a bad experience. At the time, I did not have the money to get a book. I had just started working and I had not got a pay check yet. It was really hard for me to go to class without a book. I think the College should have a program to help students who can not buy a book during the first week of school. The College should provide a book to help students out during the first week of class, until they can buy a book themselves. They should help students who cannot afford their books, because there are a lot of students who cannot actually afford to buy the books they need for class. The College should help students by giving them a book so they will not have a bad experience during those first weeks of class. I think colleges should have some type of help for students who need a book for class. There should be some type of program to help students get the books they need. There should be a program to help students who have a hard time buying their books. I think the Financial Aid Office should see us a lot quicker, and we should not have to wait for a long time when we need to speak to someone in that office. When you go to the Financial Aid Office you can expect to wait for a long time. One time I waited for more than two or three hours to see a financial aid counselor. They need more people working in the Financial Aid Office so we do not have to wait so long when we to the office to get help.”

External Factors

Some students felt the college did not do enough to provide help with balancing work and school obligations. “Personally, I worry about balancing work and school. I do not think the college can help a lot with that problem, though. I do not really have any worries or stress about school. I am taking three hours this semester, and I am working full time this semester. Going to school and working full time is difficult, but I have to work to support myself. If the teachers at the college got together and talked about the challenges students have when they have to manage school and a full time job. Teachers need to get together and discuss how they can help students who work full time and go to school full time meet their class deadline.”

Internal Factors

Many students felt their college should provide more campus based entertainment and social activities to encourage students to be more involved on campus. “Even though we are all adults, we still need to see things to do on campus that are fun and appealing. Even as college students we need to see something else to do on campus besides reading books and studying. The college should bring more entertainment on campus to help students build the endurance they need to get through the semester. The college does offer a few entertaining activities on campus and that helps to make college fun.”

Chapter Summary

The study was conducted with the purpose of identifying programs and practices associated with increased student engagement and persistence among African American male students enrolled in two community college in Texas. The three-part methodology produced data that were utilized to describe, from the focus group participants’, factors that improve their first-semester experience. The data collected from the *2007 SENSE Survey*, helped the researcher determine if there are significant differences in the first-semester experiences of entering African American male community college students and other males students in their cohort.

This chapter explained the methodology used to study African American male students' perception of their first-semester experience at the two community colleges selected for this study. An overview of the study was described in detail including the specific methods used to process and analyze the quantitative and qualitative collected. The final chapter will discuss the major findings of the study and include descriptions of the study participants' perception of their first semester experience and the educational interventions that improved their college experience during their first academic term at a community college. Additional discussions of the major findings from this research study are presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Open access to higher education, as practiced by the community college, is a manifestation of the belief that a democracy can thrive, indeed survive, only if people are educated to their fullest potential (Vaughn, 2006, p.3). To succeed, students need educational programs and institutional support services that extend beyond what is offered to support learning in the classroom. In recent years, it has become apparent that it is not enough for community colleges to welcome all potential learners. The success of African American males in higher education depends on their integration into the college environment. As more African American males take the initiative to seek high education, community college leaders and practitioners can no longer afford to be apprehensive about the innovative ideas and strategies used to retain this cohort of students.

At a national level, college enrollment and persistence for African American male students is cause for concern. Among persons 18 to 24 years of age, the lowest college enrollment rates are for black males (26.5%). In 2002, Black men comprised only 36.4 % of all students enrolled at institutions of higher education in the U.S. The degree completion rates among African American male students at the community college level are even more dismal. Institutional retention efforts at the community college level must take the needs of minority first-generation students into account to achieve more equitable attainment rates among African American male students.

The information presented in this chapter contains the summary of the major findings, conclusions, implications for further research, and recommendations for community college practitioners. The purpose of this research study was to gain an understanding of the first-year experience of African American male community college students.

Research Questions

This study sought to examine the educational experience of community college African American male students in a public two-year institution. To explore the students' perception of their first-semester experience at their community college, the researcher developed the following three research questions to guide the research study process and a summary of the findings for each question:

1. Is there a significant difference in the engagement levels among first-year male community college students by age group?
2. From the African American male students' perspective, what are the specific educational programs and institutional practices that improved their retention and persistence during the first three weeks of enrollment in a community college?
3. In the case of the African American male students, what organizational and institutional factors influenced their decision to enroll for a second semester at a community college?

Determining the factors that help African American male students is relevant to community college practitioners as they seek to develop campus-based programs and initiatives that improve persistence among this cohort of students.

Major Findings

The findings for research question one were processed quantitatively using secondary data from the 2007 *SENSE* survey. The three-part methodology produced data that were utilized to describe, from the study participants' standpoint, the organizational and institutional factors that improve their first-semester experience. The data collected during this research was analyzed according to the five key themes identified by the study participants: (1) academic and social integration, (2) entering processes, (3) educational innervations, (4) aspiration, inspiration, motivation, and (6) student recommendations.

Academic and Social Integration

The first set of survey questions selected from the 2007 *SENSE* survey data related to Academic and Social integration. The survey questions within this major category dealt with how the male

respondents interacted with administrative staff, faculty, and other students. The quantitative analysis of the questions related to Academic and Social integration revealed statistically significant differences among the three sub-categories. This next section provides details on the major findings related to academic and social integration among African American males by age group.

Student-to-Staff Interaction

The frequency statistics calculations indicated among the 781 African American male respondents a majority (30 %) indicated the administrative personnel and office staff were helpful, considerate, and flexible. Additionally, the frequency statistics calculations indicated among the 781 African American male respondents 51 % indicated at least one college staff member knew their name by the end of the first week of their first academic term. Among the 781 African American male respondents, there was also a 95 % chance of a significant difference between the mean scores by age group, on the two questions related *to Student-to-Staff Interaction*.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed there is a 95 % chance of a significant difference between the mean scores among African American male students by age group cohort in one area: *At least one college staff member knew my name*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(6, 5177) = 2.09, p > .05$. There was a perceived difference among African American male students by age group with regard to their opinion about the level of interaction they had with college administrative staff and personnel at their particular college. A mean score of 6.07 [N=1] of African American male students 50 to 64 years of age as opposed to the 1.00 [N=15] for African American male students age 65 or older who felt their interactions with administrative staff and personnel at their college was helpful, considerate, and flexible. The strength of (η^2) was .005; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

During the focus group and individual interview sessions many of the study respondents indicated the staff working at the front counter and reception areas were difficult and unsupportive, and their behavior had a negative impact on their first-day college experience. As one student indicated, “When I

came to enroll in this college, the person at the front desk was not too nice, and it gave me a bad attitude for the rest of the day.” In contrast, some students received assistance and motivational support from senior level administrators on campus and they felt their relationships with the staff helped them succeed during their first few weeks of college. On that same note, some student felt the need to take the initiative and reach out to the college staff, and the students who did reach out, had positive results when they nurtured relationship with college advisors, counselors, and staff. One of the African American male students who persisted beyond his first semester of college stated, “I feel that most of the staff members are helpful, but you have to go and talk with them and let them know when you need help. How would they [advisors and counselors] know if you need help if you keep walking around pretending you do not have a worry in the world or you do not need help? You have to go in and talk with the advisors and counselors and they will help you to the best of their ability--if you ask. Usually, if they can not help, they will find someone who can help you.”

Student-to-Faculty Interaction

The frequency statistics calculations showed among the 781 African American male respondents a majority (54 %) of the male respondents indicated at least one faculty member knew their name by the end of the first week of their first academic term. Additionally, the frequency statistics calculations indicated among the 781 African American male respondents, a majority (34%) indicated their college instructors were available, helpful, and sympathetic.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed there was a 95 % chance of a significant difference between the mean scores among African American male students by age group cohort in one area: *Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Instructors*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 741) = 2.66, p < .05$. There was a perceived difference among African American male respondents with regard to their opinion about their relationships with instructors at their particular college. A mean score of 6.11 [N=27] for African American

male students between the ages of 40 to 49 as opposed to a mean score of 1.00 [N=1] for African American males age 65 or older who felt the instructors at their college were available, helpful, and sympathetic. The strength of (η^2) was .025; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

During the focus group and individual interview sessions, some students felt their interaction with faculty was important and some students had positive interactions with college faculty. As one African American male study participant who persisted beyond his first semester at a community college indicated, “Knowing your professors will help you out in the long run. In high school I was not always on good terms with my teachers, but when I got to college I tried to change things around. Now, I really try hard to get to know my college professors.” Another male respondent who indicated he received a lot of academic advice from his developmental instructors and many of those same faculty members helped him set his academic goals. Additionally, one of the male respondents who were actively involved in the African American Male Initiatives on campus stated, “Mr. _____, the teacher I had for The African American Student Success Course, is easy to talk to. Even if you bring personal things in class, he will allow you to discuss it and he will offer advice so that everyone can benefit from the experience. For example, we have talked to him about our experiences with girls or other people on campus. With Mr. _____, you can talk to him about anything.”

Student-to-Student Interaction

The frequency statistics calculations indicated among the 781 African American male respondents, a majority (61%) of the African American male respondents indicated at least one student whom they did not know previously knew their name by the end of the first week of their first academic term. Additionally, the frequency statistics calculations among the 781 African American male respondents indicated a majority (31%) of the African American male believed their relationships with other students was friendly and supportive and they shared a sense of belonging.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed there was a 95 % chance of a significant difference between the mean scores among the African American male respondents by age

group in one area: *Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college. Your relationship with: Other Students*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 742) = 2.36, p < .05$. There was a perceived difference among African American male students by age group with regard to their perception of the quality of the relationships they had with other students at their particular college. A mean score of 6.00 [N=15] for African American male students between the ages of 50 to 64 as opposed to the 1.00 [N=1] mean score for African American males age 65 or older who felt their relationships with other students at their college was friendly and supportive and they shared a sense of belonging. The strength of (η^2) was .022; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results.

During the focus group and individual interview sessions, many of the male students indicated they had positive relationships with other students on campus and networking with other students made their earliest college experiences more rewarding. One student stated, “At this community college there is a good mixture of students. I feel that almost every student on campus is supportive. Everyone is trying to get somewhere, so we all try to help each other out.” Other students felt faculty encouraged the students to interact with each other during the first few weeks of class. As one student stated, “The most positive thing about the classes at this college was the teachers and how they encouraged the students to get to know one another during the first week of class.” Only one student in the group said he felt isolated from other students during his first few weeks of class and he stayed to himself for the first few weeks of class.

Student Engagement

The next set of survey questions selected from the 2007 *SENSE* survey data was associated with Student Engagement. The survey questions within this major category dealt with how often the male respondents engaged in academic and social activities with faculty and other students at their college. The quantitative analysis of the questions related to Student Engagement revealed statistically significant differences in both areas. This next section provides details on the major findings related to student engagement among African American males by age group.

Student-to-Faculty Engagement

The frequency statistics calculations indicated among the 781 African American male respondents a majority (35%) of the African American male respondents indicated they discussed an assignment or grade with an instructor, on several occasions, during the first three weeks of their first academic term. Additionally, the frequency statistics calculations among the 781 a majority (54%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not discuss ideas from readings or classes with an instructor during the first three weeks of their first academic term.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed there was a 95 % chance of a significant difference between the mean scores among the African American male respondents by age group in two areas: The ANOVA results for the first question, *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 749) = 2.12, p < .05$. There was a perceived difference among African American male students by age group with regard to the survey respondents' opinion about the level of engagement they had with instructors at their particular college. A mean score of 3.00 [N=1] for African American males age 65 or older as opposed to a mean score of 2.22 [N=346] for African American males ages 18 to 19 who indicated they discussed an assignment or grade with their instructor during the first few weeks of their first academic term. The strength of (η^2) was .019; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

On ANOVA results for the second question, *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 748) = 3.09, p < .05$. Additionally, a mean score of 3.00 [N=1] for African American males age 65 or older as opposed to 1.66 [N=56] for African American males between the ages of 30 to 39 indicated they did discuss ideas from readings or classes with their instructor during the first three weeks of their first academic term. The strength of (η^2) was .028; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results. In this

case, there was not a perceived difference among African American male students by age group with regard to the survey respondents' opinion about the level of engagement they had with instructors at their particular college.

Student-to-Student Engagement

The frequency statistics calculations among the 781 African American male respondents showed a majority (52%) of the African American male indicated they did not work with classmates to prepare class assignments, during the first three weeks of their first academic term. Additionally, the frequency statistics calculations among the 781 African American showed a majority (43%) of the African American male respondents indicated on several occasions, they did work with other students on a project in class, during the first three weeks of their first academic term.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed there was a 95 % chance of a significant difference between the mean scores among the African American male respondents by age group in one area: Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, how often did you do the following: Work with other students on a project during class*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 755) = 2.01, p < .05$. There was a perceived difference among African American male respondents by age group with regard to their engagement with other students at their particular college. A mean score of 3.00 [N=1] for African American male respondents between age 65 or older as opposed to the mean score of 2.43 [N=] for African American males respondents between the ages of 25 to 29 who indicated how often they worked with other students on a project during class. The strength of (Eta^2) was .018; therefore, the effect size did not influence the one-way ANOVA results.

During the focus group and individual interview sessions, a few of the students indicated they do not like working in groups, especially if it is not required. As one student indicated, "When you work in groups, someone will let you down every time. I like working on my own because working in groups can be hard, especially if other people in your group do not do their part, except in a class like biology." In

contrast, some students prefer to work in groups with other students and they felt working in groups has had a positive effect on their learning experience. As one of the male respondents who persisted beyond his first semester of enrollment indicated, “Every class I take I always find a group of people to work with me in a group. Working in groups is easier and we should work together in some classes. We are all in this together, so we might as well help each other out.”

Entering Processes

The third set of survey questions selected from the 2007 *SENSE* survey data was associated with Entering Processes. The survey questions within this major category dealt with the male respondents’ perception of the campus environment and the academic advising and planning services offered at their college. The quantitative analysis of the questions related to Entering Process revealed statistically significant differences among two sub categories. This next section provides details on the major findings related to Entering Processes among African American males by age group.

College Campus Environment

The frequency statistics calculations among the 781 African American male respondents showed a majority (41%) of the African American male respondents strongly agreed with the statement and they felt welcomed at the college by the end of the first week of their first academic term. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed there was a 95 % chance of a significant difference between the mean scores among the African American male respondents by age group in one area: *The very first time I came to this college I felt welcomed*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 751) = 3.17, p < .05$. A mean score of 3.00 [N=2] for African American male respondents as age 65 or older opposed to a mean score of 1.60 [N=15] African American males between the ages of 50 to 64 strongly agreed with the statement and they felt welcomed at the college by the end of the first week of their first academic term. The strength of (η^2) was .029; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results. There was not a perceived difference among African American male respondents with regard to their perception of the campus environment at their college.

During the focus groups and individual interview sessions, many of the study respondents who participated in an organized sports or music program felt the campus environment was nurturing and welcoming. Several students, who were involved in the African American Male Initiatives on campus, felt the community college environment was like home and it was a place where they were given a second chance. As one student who was actively involved in their college's programs for African American males indicated, "This College is like another home for me. I spend a lot of time here, I play basketball here and I work here on campus. I lift weights here and meet with my friends here." In contrast, many of the students who at one particular campus indicated they felt the people [faculty and staff] here are judgmental and they pre-judge you. They [faculty and staff] assume you are not here to go to school and they treat you like you are an outsider. Well for me or us [black males] on campus, we are harassed by the police on the campus, everyday. I feel like they are always watching everything we do."

College Academic Advising and Planning

The frequency statistics calculations among the 781 African American male respondents showed a majority (77%) of the African American male respondents indicated they were aware of academic advising and planning, by the first three weeks of their first academic term. Additionally, the frequency statistics calculations showed a majority (35%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not use the academic advising and planning services, provided by their college, during the first three weeks of their first academic term.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed there was a 95 % chance of a significant difference between the mean scores among African American and other male respondents in one area: Results for the one-way ANOVA associated with the second question: *Thinking about the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: How often did you use it? Academic advising/planning*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 717) = 2.35, p < .05$. A mean score of 2.44 [N=25] for African American males respondents between the ages 40 to 49 as opposed to the 1.96 [N=93] for African American male respondents between the ages of 22 to 24 indicated how often they used

the academic advising and planning services, provided by their college, during the first three weeks of their first academic term. The strength of (η^2) was .022; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results. There was not a perceived difference among African American male respondents by age group with regard to how often they used the academic advising/planning services at their college.

Some students did not consult with an academic counselor or advisor prior to enrolling in classes. As one student indicated, “I was really young and I did not know which classes I should take my first semester in college, so I stacked up a lot of hard classes during my first semester. No one told me to take an elective to lighten the load. During my first semester, I registered for math, English, history, biology, and psychology—in one semester—and I did not take any electives. My course load caught up with me and I had to get a job, so my first semester of college was really hard. I think the college advisors should have been more helpful.”

Educational Interventions

The first set of survey questions selected from the 2007 *SENSE* survey data related to Educational Interventions. The survey questions within this major category sought to determine if the male respondents took part in the student success programs offered by their college. The quantitative analysis of the questions related to Educational Interventions revealed statistically significant differences among the two sub-categories. This next section provides details on the major findings related to academic and social integration among African American males by age group.

Student Orientation Programs

The frequency statistics calculations among the 781 African American male respondents showed a majority (90%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not take part in an online orientation program prior to the beginning of classes. Additionally, the frequency statistics calculations among the 781 African American male respondents showed a majority (68%) of the African American male respondents indicated they did not attend an on-campus orientation program prior to the beginning of classes.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed there was a 95% chance of a significant difference between the mean scores among African American and other male respondents in one area: *The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (Mark all that apply): I took part in an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 762) = 2.21, p < .05$. There was a perceived difference among the African American respondents by age group with regard to their participation in an on-campus orientation program at their college. A mean score of 1.00 [N=2] for African American male respondents age 65 or older as opposed to a mean score of .18 [N= 28] for African American male respondents between the ages of 40 to 49 who indicated they took part in an on-campus orientation program prior to the beginning of classes. The strength of (η^2) was .020; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results.

During the focus group and individual interview, many students indicated they did not participate in the on-campus student orientation program offered at their college. Students who attended the campus orientation did not find the session helpful or necessary. Some students felt the campus orientation programs should be more engaging and interactive. One student indicated, "I attended the orientation. I thought it was required. We did not do anything special. The orientation was in a classroom with one teacher and the teacher just talked to us about the College."

In contrast, one student who persisted beyond his first semester of enrollment at his community college stated, "Students who attended orientation programs sponsored by the college's *Male Initiative* program indicated the sessions they attended were helpful, interactive and engaging. I did participate in an orientation on campus organized by *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program*. The speakers we had during the session were very engaging and we were allowed to ask questions and discuss the kind of issues we had as black male students on campus. This orientation program was facilitated by the Vice President of Student Development. At the orientation session for *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program*, we learned about the types of services that were offered on campus. We also learned about the mentor program and other activities that were available to African American male students on campus. The

orientation we had at the college allowed us to be open and ask frank questions. I liked the orientation because it was interactive. We did not just sit there and listen to people talking to us about College. We were allowed to ask questions, openly. That is where I found out about the volunteer and scholarship opportunities that were available through *The Student Leadership and Mentoring Program*.”

Student Success or Student Development Courses

The frequency statistics calculations among the 781 African American male respondents showed the responses were split 50/50. Fifty percent of the African American male respondents indicated they were enrolled in a student success or student development courses and the other 50 % indicated they were not enrolled in this type of course during the first three weeks of their first academic term at their college.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed there was a 95 % chance of a significant difference between the mean scores among African American by age group in one area: *Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college: Student success or student development course*, were found to be statistically significant, $F(7, 725) = 3.04, p < .05$. There was a perceived difference between the mean scores among African American males and their participating in a student success or student development courses. A mean score of 2.00 [N=7] for African American male respondents ages 18 to 19 as opposed to a mean score of 1.45 [N=341] for African American male respondents age 65 or older had indicated they enrolled in a student success or student development course during the first three weeks of their first academic term at the college. The strength of (η^2) was .029; therefore, the effect size did influence the one-way ANOVA results.

During the focus group and individual interview sessions, several students participated in a gender-specific student success course for male students during their first semester of enrollment of their first academic term a college; many of those students felt the courses was helpful and informative. As one of the alumni students from this course indicated, “During the [Male Initiative] class I learned that I am no different from the next man on campus. There were about 20 Black men in the [Male Initiative] class and at

least 15 of us had some of the same things in common. For example, most of us grew up without a father in our life. And it is the same thing with all my friends. We all grew up without a father in our life, so we were forced to watch our mommas struggle to raise us and our siblings. I think the experience I had in the [*Male Initiative*] class made me realize that just because a person acts a certain way there is way more to them—more than what you see on the surface.”

Theoretical Implications

The first objective of the research study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the nature of the first-year experience among African American male community college students. Second, the researcher sought to determine from the African American male students’ perspective the institutional programs and initiatives that influence their persistence at two community colleges in Texas. The final section of the research study was used to explore the dynamics of the first-year experience for the African American male focus group and interview participants. The data collected during the three phases of the research study allowed the research to examine the factors that influence retention and persistence among African American male community college students. This next section of the chapter will focus on the theoretical implications of the data collected. It will also provide details on the inferences drawn based on the theoretical perspective outline in the previous chapters.

Tinto’s Models Student Integration Model

Vincent Tinto’s (1975) Student Integration Model (SIM) offers a longitudinal explanation for student attrition and the factors that influence a student’s decision to leave college. Tinto (1975) used this model to differentiate between reasons why students choose to leave the institutions, and he asserts that many students leave because they are not equally integrated into the academic and social systems within the college. Furthermore, Tinto (1975) suggests that students who are too involved in one aspect of the college environment, whether academic or social, the likelihood of their departure is eminent. For example, a student who spent more time studying and less time interacting with faculty and other students

on campus may also be prone to drop out of college. Similarly, a student who spends an extreme amount of time engaged in social activity, they too may be at risk.

Many of the first-year male respondents who were in the first three weeks of their studies at the community college indicated they enrolled in college because they wanted to play sports. As one student stated, “I decided to go to college because I wanted to play baseball. If I had not made the baseball team here at the College, I probably would not have signed up for classes and I probably would have joined the Air Force, instead.” Although several students fell within this description, they all agreed that having the additional support was helpful and supportive. Many of the study participants who were attracted to the college because of the campus-based athletic or music program indicated they received a great deal of support and assistance from the faculty member and their coaches. Many of the students said their coaches and music teachers helped them navigate through the enrollment processes successfully. Several students mentioned they received academic advising from their athletic coaches.

Throughout the focus group and interview sessions, many of the male participants stated they were drawn to college because they wanted to be around female students. One of the first-year male respondents from the second focus group stated, “My experience here is positive because of the girls—there are a lot of girls here on campus. I do not really like school, but I like girls and girls like school. I know that girls like educated young men, so I know I need to become educated so that I can be with the smart girls. When girls find out I am in college they are willing to talk to me.”

In contrast, some of the students were highly focused on academics and they were motivated by the high paying careers and financial security. “When I first graduated from high school, I enrolled in college and I ended up dropping out. At first, I really just wanted to work and I did not want to go to college. I got sick of having dead-end jobs, and I realized I needed a degree.” Additionally, many of the students were motivated to persist beyond their first semester of college because they believed they could escape an unfavorable lifestyle if they earned a college degree. As one male student pointed out,

“The thing that influenced my decision to attend college the most was the difference I could see in the path that I have taken. Some of my friends who did not go to college have been living under

the influence—smoking, drinking, living a fast life—and they did not mature as much as I did. Even some of the students who went to the university straight out of high school had some challenges too, some of them still ended up living a fast life. I also realized that I have saved thousands of dollars by going to the community college and I was able to improve my G.P.A. For some of my friends, going to the university right after high school, has hurt them as a person because they were not mature enough.”

According to Tinto (1975) these students are more likely to persist when they feel educational attainment is an economic necessity. Clearly there is a relationship between student success and student aspiration.

The level of interaction with college faculty and staff also influenced the students’ perception of their first-semester experience. Students who viewed their interactions with college faculty and staff reported they felt their positive interactions with college faculty and staff led to their success and satisfaction during their first semester of college. The results also indicated that students would like to be involved in campus-based programs that help them to stay motivated and involved on campus.

Astin’s Theory of Involvement

Astin’s *Theory of Involvement* suggest an involved student is one who devotes considerable energy to academics, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations and activities, and interacts often with faculty (Astin, 1984, p. 292). Furthermore, the most basic tenet surrounding this theory centers on the idea that students who are involved in both the academic and social aspects of the college experience are more engaged in the learning process. Being involved on campus requires the student to invest a considerable amount of time toward developing and nurturing relationships with faculty, staff, and other students on campus.

The level of involvement among the male students who participated in the qualitative focus group and interview sessions were dependent on the student’s social interests and academic goals, as well as the student’s other commitments. Many of the African American male students in this study felt they needed to take the initiative and reach out to the college faculty and staff and seek out mentors on campus. Those same students indicated when they did make the effort to nurture relationships with college faculty and staff, they had positive results. Many of the students involved in gender-specific student success courses and/or programs indicated they received academic advising and counseling from faculty or college coaches.

In contrast, the study participants at both community colleges indicated the relationships with the staff in the administrative offices, especially those at the front counter and reception areas were difficult and unsupportive, and their behavior had a negative impact on their first-day college experience.

As mentioned previously, the male study participants were first year students during the fall of 2007 and the fall of 2008. The male study participants who were first-year students during the fall of 2007 indicated they received assistance and motivational support from senior level administrators on campus. This group of male study participants had a positive outlook and they felt their relationships with the administrative staff helped them succeed during their first few weeks of college. Students enrolled in the *African American Male Students Success Courses and Programs* felt their interaction with college faculty was helpful and supportive. Many of the study participants have continued the *Mentor/Mentee* relationship with campus staff members who mentored them during their first semester at the college and the positive outcome motivated the students to become involved in their college's recruitment program as mentors for incoming students.

Implications for Practice

As leaders of community colleges face the challenge of ensuring that all students persist to degree attainment, it is not enough to assume the traditional educational interventions used to improve the first-year experience for all students may not work for all students. Evidence cited in this study supports the notion that community college leaders should continue to develop and strengthen the educational interventions for student success among minority male students.

The research data from this study suggests the key components of the educational interventions designed to support first-year African American male community college students include mentoring, student leadership and community service programs, and gender-specific student success courses. The results from the 2007 *SENSE* survey also indicated many first-year students did not participate in the on-campus orientation programs offered at their colleges.

Studies have shown that the greatest proportions of students who leave are likely to do so within the first four semesters. Thus, retention strategies are essential and they should be implemented early in the student's college experience (Thayer, 2000). Colleges must review their entering processes including the types of student orientation programs that are offered to first-year students.

The discussions with the focus group and interview participants also revealed that many of the male community college students did not attend the student orientation because they felt it was unnecessary. The male respondents who did attend the student orientation program felt the program should be more interactive and engaging. The benefit of student orientation programs should not be underestimated. It is recommended that community colleges develop orientation programs that are effective in integrating first-year students into the academic and social culture of the college campus. One study participant suggested that college require all first-year students to attend their College's student orientation program.

The greatest gain in retention rates will result from focusing not only on the selection process, but also the student-environment interaction after college entry (Thayer, 2000). The results of this study indicate the "front door" experience can influence persistence among African American male students. Many of the students who had positive front door experiences were those who participated in gender-specific programs and initiatives early on.

In fact, several of the male study respondents reported they had a positive first-semester experience, because they were enrolled in a male initiative student success course during their first semester of enrollment of their first academic term at a community college. Colleges should continue to offer gender-specific student success courses for African American male students. The gender-specific courses should integrate student success topics into the course curriculum that focus on study skills and time management, degree transfer, financial aid management, choosing a college major, and making the grade.

Several students indicated they had negative experiences with college staff during peak registration and advising times. College should reevaluate the academic advising, financial aid, and registration process so that students are equipped with the knowledge and assistance they need to successfully navigate through the first few weeks of the enrollment process.

In line with Gullatt and Jan (2003), student success programs are most effective when they affirm and help students understand that academic success is not attained through individual achievement alone, but through an axis of support. Although many of the study participants indicated they were apprehensive about their active collaboration in and outside the classroom with faculty, staff, and other students most of the male study participants who persisted beyond their first semester indicated their interactions with these groups helped build their confidence.

College faculty should be encouraged to continue to provide advising and support to students in order to maintain a healthy learning experience for students. Relationships with faculty are a key component of student success among African American male students and faculty should be encouraged to incorporate opportunities for academic and social integration into the learning environment.

Furthermore, many of the study participants indicated that did not prefer to work in groups, many of the students found the experience beneficial once they learned how to use the learning community structure to their advantage. Some community colleges have implemented student support services programs that include “learning community” type strategies. Student learning communities help students form supportive peer groups that extend beyond the classroom (Thayer, 2000). Students should be provided with the opportunity to work in formal learning communities that are supervised by college administrators, faculty, and staff, in order to develop a sense of belonging on campus.

It is recommended that community college continue to develop programs that provide African American students with the social capital necessary to persist beyond their first semester of enrollment. Programs for African American male community college students should also provide a series of interventions that emphasize academics as well as college preparatory and study skills workshops to help

this cohort of students develop a positive attitude toward their academic achievement and their decision to enroll in college.

Recommendations for Further Research

Community colleges should be commended for their commitment to living up to the responsibilities that come with being an open door institution. Based on the data collected from the focus group and individual interview study participants, many of the educational intervention used to improve persistence and retention among African American male community college students are helpful; and it was evident that students were appreciative of their College's effort to help them succeed. It is with the utmost respect to those dedicated to providing excellent educational opportunities to minority students that these recommendations are set forth.

First and foremost, it is important to recognize that community colleges leaders and practitioners must understand there is no magic formula to address this phenomenon. For example, several of the study participants were involved in athletic and music programs at their college, which meant that many of those students had additional support from faculty and staff mentors on campus. As evident by the findings in this study, a combination of approaches appear to provide a comprehensive strategy that, once refined for the particular setting and student population, must be tailored according to the college system or district, and in some cases to the campus.

The framework, for which this study was developed, can help to identify the appropriate entering processes to increase enrollment and improve retention among African American male community college students. Based on the literature review and the major findings in this study, the following research strategies are recommended for further research:

1. The focus group and individual interview sessions occurred over the course of one year, and the data collection was restricted to the first-semester of enrollment and the subjects were not tracked, as they would be in a longitudinal study. Therefore, this study cannot be used to generalize beyond the students and the community colleges that agreed to participate in the

study. A replication of studies with varying populations of male students, in different community college institutions over a longer period time is recommended.

2. Furthermore, community college leaders, and policymakers would benefit from surveying and tracking student participation and program success for programs that have already been introduced. A comparative analysis of their college experiences over the course of one year, and after they have participate in a campus-based male initiative programs or initiatives at their college, could lead to a better understanding of the impact of the gender-specific educational interventions and entering processes that are currently used in higher education to engage African American men.
3. As noted in Chapter One, this was a also singular study consisting of entering African American male students enrolled in two community colleges in Texas; therefore, the students' perception of their first-year experiences may not be similar to the experiences of other male community college students in a different state or region. Regional and national studies conducted at different institutions can improve the consistency of the programs offered to first-year African American males enrolled in community colleges.
4. The results from this study suggest that students attending urban and rural community colleges had different first-year experiences. By far, students who attended the urban community college appeared to be more engaged in campus-based social and community programs. A comparative analysis of male students who attend urban and rural community colleges would help to identify specific campus interventions that work best for community colleges in different regions. Results from replicated studies at the national level would help build a case for the need for collaboration among community college leaders, policymakers, and other higher education stakeholders to design a model programs and initiatives to help African American men successfully navigate through the higher education pipeline.

5. As stated previously, this study has some limitations as many of the students who participated in the study were involved in formal or informal learning communities at their community college (i.e. athletic, intramural sports, and music programs). Although there is prior research on student athletes in higher education, a comparative analysis of African American male community college students who participate in campus-based athletic and extra-curricular programs and those who do not, would be helpful. Exploration of the data using this factor would provide insight on the nature of experiences for African American male student athletes vs. male students who are not, and it will provide insight about which groups are more engaged during the first year of college.
6. The sample size for study was small; therefore, the generalizations do not include information about other male community college students of varying age, ethnic origin, and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the quantitative portion of this study explored of the differences in the level of engagement for first-year African American male community college students in the context of their race and age. It is recommended that the findings from this study be utilized to explore the effects of the student's socioeconomic status and the effect it has on their ability to persist beyond their first-year of college. This type of study would help to identify if there are differences among African American males who may or may not have the financial means to enroll in and complete their education in a two-year institution. It would also provide insight on the types of interventions community colleges would need to develop to help African American males persist to degree attainment.

Conclusion

It is the responsibility of higher education college administrators, faculty and staff to create a learning environment where student can successfully navigate their way to degree attainment. As a growing population in higher education, first-generation students represent a unique group with distinct goals, motivations, and constraints (Ayala and Striplen, 2002). The challenge of creating educational

interventions to improve participation, persistence, and degree attainment among African American men may require help from policymakers and support from other constituencies. Garnering support from outside agencies and other constituencies will require community college leaders to organize their efforts and build programs that include built-in accountability measures and sustainable outcomes.

It is the intents of this research study to make a small contribution to the emerging body of literature and provide insight into what community colleges in Texas are doing to promote academic achievement and student success one African American male at a time. The results from this study suggest that further investigations on a national scale would provide the basis for a national investigation of the conditions, experiences, and opinions of African American men who make the decision to seek higher education. Community college leaders and practitioners must devise ways in which African American male students are provided with the best possible educational interventions to enhance participation, persistence, and degree attainment among African American men.

An investigation of the current best practices of the male initiative programs that are currently in place at varying levels of education, including K-12 and post secondary institution, can further the efforts of programs with the best intentions. However, a movement of this magnitude will require intense data sharing and stronger collaboration at every level of the educational pipeline. In doing so, we can ensure that African American males receive the support they need to reach their full potential. Ensuring the future of the black male is critical, not just for African Americans, but for the prosperity, health, and well-being of the entire American family (Morial, 2007, p. 15).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: 2007 SENSE SURVEY

[illegible]

12. This question has two parts:
Please answer both parts for
each of the courses.

	My placement test scores <i>indicated that I needed this course</i> :				I <i>enrolled in this course</i> during my first academic term at this college:		
	Yes	No	Don't Recall	Didn't Take Test	Yes	No	Don't Recall
a. Developmental/College Prep Reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Developmental/College Prep Writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Developmental/College Prep Math	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. The following statements are about the college's orientation program for new students (mark all that apply).

- ☐ I took part in an online orientation prior to the beginning of classes
☐ I attended an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes
☐ I enrolled in an orientation course as part of my course schedule during my first academic term at this college
☐ I was not aware of a college orientation program or course
☐ I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues

14. This set of items asks you about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college.

	Yes	No	Don't Recall	N/A
a. A college staff member reviewed with me college materials such as student handbook, college catalogue, program requirements, and web-based resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. I was <u>required</u> to take a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET, AccuPlacer, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. I took a placement test (ACT, SAT, COMPASS, ASSET, AccuPlacer, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. I was <u>exempt</u> from taking a placement test at this college because of my test scores on previous exams or coursework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. An academic advisor reviewed my placement test scores (ASSET, COMPASS, ACT, SAT, etc.) to help me understand the courses I needed to take during my FIRST ACADEMIC TERM	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. An academic advisor explained that the college <u>required</u> me to enroll in the classes indicated by my placement test scores <u>during my first academic term</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. An academic advisor helped me to select a course of study/program or major	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. I took one or more of my courses in order to qualify for financial aid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. I was informed that I could apply for financial aid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. A financial aid staff member helped me analyze my needs for financial aid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. I applied, but did not receive financial aid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. I received financial aid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. At least one college staff member knew my name	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. At least one other student (whom I didn't previously know) knew my name	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. At least one faculty member knew my name	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. All the courses I needed to take during my first academic term were available at times convenient for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college:

	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
a. English as a second language course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Student success or student development course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Organized learning community (linked courses for a group of students)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. This set of items asks you about your earliest experiences at this college. To respond, please think about experiences you had BY THE END OF THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Recall
a. The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. I was able to access the information I needed to complete the enrollment process (admissions, registration, financial aid, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. An academic advisor was available at times convenient for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. A college faculty or staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school (work, children, dependents, etc.) to help me figure out how many courses to take	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns <u>related</u> to my coursework.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns about matters <u>unrelated</u> to my coursework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Instructors had activities to introduce students to one another	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Instructors clearly explained academic resources and services available <u>at this college</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Instructors clearly explained course grading policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Instructors clearly explained course syllabi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. I knew how to get in touch with/contact my instructors outside of class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, *how often* did you do the following:

	Not at all	Once	Several Times	At Least Weekly	Don't Recall
a. Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Prepare at least one draft of an assignment before turning it in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Complete and turn in at least one assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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 Bindery Cut Bindery Cut

PLEASE DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA
SERIAL # ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

19. Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college.
Your relationship with:

a. Other Students

Friendly, supportive, sense of belonging	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation
------------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------------------------------

b. Instructors

Available, helpful, sympathetic	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic
---------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------------------

c. Administrative Personnel & Offices

Helpful, considerate, flexible	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unhelpful, inconsiderate, rigid
--------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------------

20. Thinking about the time from your first contact with this college, through the end of THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, what has been your primary source of academic advising (academic planning, course recommendations, graduation requirements, etc.)? **Choose only one:**

☐ Academic advisor (not faculty) ☐ Friends, family or other students ☐ Other college materials
☐ Academic advisor (faculty) ☐ Online college registration and/or computerized degree advisor system ☐ I did not receive academic advising

21. Was a specific person assigned to you so you could see him/her each time you needed information or assistance?
☐ Yes ☐ No

22. During the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college, about how many hours did you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

	None	1-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	30 or more
a. Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, doing homework, or other activities related to your program)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Working for pay	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Did you add/drop any classes within the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM at this college?

☐ Yes, without the assistance/knowledge of a college staff or faculty member
☐ Yes, with the assistance/knowledge of a college staff or faculty member
☐ No - I did not add or drop any courses

24. When do you plan to take classes at this college again?

☐ I will accomplish my goal(s) during this term and will not be returning
☐ I have no current plans to return
☐ Within the next 12 months
☐ Uncertain

25. While in high school, did you

	Yes	No	Don't Recall	N/A
a. Take math all four years?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Take math during your senior year?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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 PAGE 5

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26. Would you recommend this college to a friend or family member?

☐ Yes ☐ No

27. In what range was your overall high school grade average?

☐ A ☐ B- to C+
☐ A- to B+ ☐ C
☐ B ☐ C- or lower
☐ Don't Recall

28. Your sex:

☐ Male ☐ Female

29. Mark your age group.

☐ Under 18 ☐ 30 to 39
☐ 18 to 19 ☐ 40 to 49
☐ 20 to 21 ☐ 50 to 64
☐ 22 to 24 ☐ 65+
☐ 25 to 29

	Yes	No
30. Are you married?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. Do you have children who live with you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Is English your native (first) language?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. Are you an international student or nonresident alien?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. What is your racial identification? (Mark only one)

☐ American Indian or Native American ☐ Native Hawaiian ☐ White, Non-Hispanic
☐ Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander ☐ Black or African American, Non-Hispanic ☐ Hispanic, Latino, Spanish
☐ Other

35. What is the highest academic credential you have earned?

☐ None ☐ Vocational/technical ☐ Bachelor's degree
☐ High school diploma or GED ☐ Associate degree ☐ Master's/Doctoral/Professional

36. What is your primary reason for attending this college? (Mark only one)

☐ Complete a certificate ☐ Obtain or update job-related skills
☐ Obtain an Associate degree ☐ Self-improvement/personal enjoyment
☐ Transfer to a 4-year college/university ☐ Change careers

37. Who in your family has attended at least some college? (Mark all that apply)

☐ Mother ☐ Spouse/Partner
☐ Father ☐ Legal Guardian
☐ Brother/Sister ☐ None of the above
☐ Child

38. Please provide your student identification number by filling in the corresponding ovals. For example, in the first column, indicate the first number or letter in your student ID number, and so forth. (OPTIONAL)

(Please begin here)

A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J
K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K
L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q
R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Additional Items
(Please respond to these items if requested)

1 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	13 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
2 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	14 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
3 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	15 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
4 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	16 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
5 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	17 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
6 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	18 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
7 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	19 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
8 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	20 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
9 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	21 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
10 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	22 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
11 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	23 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
12 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)	24 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)

***Your responses will remain confidential and
individual responses will not be reported***

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR VIEWS

PLEASE DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA

☐

SERIAL #

Mark Reflex® forms by Pearson NCS MM271718-1 321 Printed in U.S.A.

Press Cut ↙
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Bindery Fold ↘

PERF

2007 SENSE SURVEY CODEBOOK

Item #	Variable Name	Item Description/Variable Label	Response Value
Please note the following for the <i>SENSE</i> data set: Invalid responses are coded as missing “.”			
13a	ONLORIEN	I took part in an online orientation prior to the beginning of classes.	0= No Response 1= Response
13c	CSORIEN	I enrolled in an orientation course as part of my course schedule during my first academic term at this college.	0= No Response 1= Response
13e	UNAORIEN	I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues.	0= No Response 1= Response
14c	TKPTEST	I took a placement test (ACT, SAT, COMPASS, ASSET, AccuPlacer, etc.)	1= Yes 2= No 3= Don't Recall 4= N/A
14d	EXPTEST	I was <i>exempt</i> from taking a placement test at this college because of my test scores on previous exams or coursework	1= Yes 2= No 3= Don't Recall 4= N/A
14n	CSTAFNAM	At least one college staff member knew my name	1= Yes 2= No 3= Don't Recall 4= N/A
14o	OSTUDNAM	At least one other student (whom I didn't previously know) knew my name	1= Yes 2= No 3= Don't Recall 4= N/A
14p	FACNAM	At least one faculty member knew my name	1= Yes 2= No 3= Don't Recall 4= N/A
15b	ENRLSSDC	Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : Student success or student development course?	1= Enrolled 2= Not Enrolled
15c	ENRLOLC	Please indicate in which of the following you enrolled during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> : Organized learning community (linked courses for a group of students)?	1= Enrolled 2= Not Enrolled
16a	WELCOME	The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome	1= Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Neutral 4= Disagree 5= Strongly Disagree 6= Don't Recall

Item #	Variable Name	Item Description/Variable Label	Response Value
16b	NENRINFO	I was able to access the information I needed to complete the enrollment process (admissions, registration, financial aid, etc.)	1= Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Neutral 4= Disagree 5= Strongly Disagree 6= Don't Recall
16e	CLASSREL	I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns <i>related</i> to my coursework	1= Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Neutral 4= Disagree 5= Strongly Disagree 6= Don't Recall
16f	CLASSUNR	I could go to a faculty or staff member with questions or concerns about matters <i>unrelated</i> to my coursework	1= Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Neutral 4= Disagree 5= Strongly Disagree 6= Don't Recall
17e	PINCLASS	During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> , <i>how often</i> did you do the following: Work with other students on a project during class	1= Not at all 2= Once 3= Several Times 4= At Least Weekly 5= Don't Recall
17f	PREPOUTC	During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> , <i>how often</i> did you do the following: Work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	1= Not at all 2= Once 3= Several Times 4= At Least Weekly 5= Don't Recall
17i	FACASSN	During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> , <i>how often</i> did you do the following: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor	1= Not at all 2= Once 3= Several Times 4= At Least Weekly 5= Don't Recall
17j	FACIDOC	During THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> , <i>how often</i> did you do the following: Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class	1= Not at all 2= Once 3= Several Times 4= At Least Weekly 5= Don't Recall
18a-1	ACADPLNG	Did you know about it? Academic advising/planning	1= Yes 2= No
18f-1	FAADVS	Did you know about it? Financial aid advising	1= Yes 2= No
18a-2	ACADPUSE	How often did you use it? Academic advising/planning	1= Not at All 2= Once 3= Several Times 4= At least Weekly 5= Don't Recall

Item #	Variable Name	Item Description/Variable Label	Response Value
18f-2	FAUSE	How often did you use it? Financial aid advising	1= Not at All 2= Once 3= Several Times 4= At least Weekly 5= Don't Recall
18a-3	ACADPSAT	How satisfied were you with it? Academic advising/planning	1= Very 2= Somewhat 3= Not at All 4= Don't Recall 5= N/A
18f-3	FAADVSAT	How satisfied were you with it? Financial aid advising	1= Very 2= Somewhat 3= Not at All 4= Don't Recall 5= N/A
19a	STURELN	Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> . Your relationship with: Other Students	1= Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation 2 3 4 5 6 7= Friendly, supportive, sense of belonging
19b	FACRELN	Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> . Your relationship with: Instructors	1= Unavailable, unsupportive, unsympathetic 2 3 4 5 6 7= Available, helpful, sympathetic
19c	STAFRELN	Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationships with people, during the FIRST THREE WEEKS OF YOUR FIRST ACADEMIC TERM <u>at this college</u> . Your relationship with: Administrative Personnel & Offices	1= Unhelpful, inconsiderate, rigid 2 3 4 5 6 7= Helpful, considerate, flexible

The items below refer to derived *SENSE* variables:

Variable Name	Item Description/Variable Label	Response Value
return	Entering/Returning students	0=Entering 1=Returning

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Male Student Initiative Interactive Focus Group

A doctoral student from the University of Texas at Austin would like to invite you to participate in a discussion about your first-year experience at [Insert College or Campus Name Here].

Please take advantage of this unique opportunity to share your insight and experiences as a male student enrolled in [Insert Program Title Here]

Participants' personal information will remain strictly anonymous and the documentation and data collected during the focus group and individual interview activities will remain confidential.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older.

For more information please contact:

[Insert Coordinator Name]

[Insert Telephone Number]

**Male Student Focus Group: Wednesday, June 25th
2: 00 p.m. to 4: 00 p.m.
[INSERT CAMPUS NAME HERE]
Location/Room L117**

[INSERT COLLEGE LOGO HERE]

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT-STUDENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Title: Programs and Practices Associated with Increased Student Engagement and Persistence among First-Year African American Male Students at two Community Colleges in Texas

Principal Investigator: Valschkia Dabney Smith
Doctoral Candidate
Community College Leadership Program
The University of Texas at Austin

Dissertation Committee Chair: Dr. Walter G. Bumphus, A. M. Aikin Regents Chair
The University of Texas at Austin
Department of Educational Administration, College of Education

Introduction

This is a study supported by the University of Texas at Austin, and it is designed to research best-practice strategies for student retention and student success among African American minority males students enrolled in community colleges across the country.

This form provides you with information about the study. The principal investigator, Valschkia Dabney Smith, will answer any questions you have about the research. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to take part in the study.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. In addition, you can stop your participation at any time by simply telling the researcher.

Purpose

The purpose of my research is to gain an understanding of the first-year experience of African American male community college students. The activities that will occur during the focus sessions and the individual interviews are designed to allow the student participants to discuss what the college is doing well and what it needs to improve upon to help African American male students stay in college.

Research Questions for the Study:

1. Is there a significant difference in the engagement levels among first-year male community college students by age group?
2. From the African American male students' perspective, what are the specific educational programs and institutional practices that supported their retention and persistence during the first semester of enrollment in a two-year institution?
3. In the case of the African American male students, what organizational and institutional factors influenced their decision to enroll for a second semester at a two-year institution?

Terms and Conditions:

If you agree to participate in the study, we will ask you to actively partake in one focus group or individual interview session facilitated by the principal investigator. In addition, you may be asked to participate in one individual interview with the principal investigator, which can be arranged according to your schedule and availability.

Time Commitment:

The focus group session will be held on campus and this process will require approximately 90 minutes. If you are selected to participate in individual interviews you will be asked to participate in a 60 minute interview facilitated by the principal investigator.

Risks and Benefits:

The risk associated with this study is no greater than everyday life. Practices will be implemented to assure confidentiality; however, a possible risk involves the loss of confidentiality. The potential benefits of the study are to identify some of the academic and non-academic factors that influence first-year African American male students to continue their studies at a community college.

Confidentially:

Interviews will be audio or videotaped. Tapes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them. Tapes will be kept in a secure place (e.g., a locked file cabinet in the investigator's office). Tapes will be heard or viewed only for research purposes by the investigator and her associates, unless prior written consent is obtained. In addition, tapes will be retained in a secure place for possible future analysis.

The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept private. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin, and members of the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review the research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject unless written approval is obtained from the individual interview and survey participants to include quotes attributable to the individual(s).

(Please see signature lines below.)

Compensation:

No compensation will be provided.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about the study please ask. If you have questions later or want additional information, please contact Valschkia Dabney Smith by telephone at 832-865-6013 or by email at vdabneysmith@gmail.com.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, complaints, concerns, or questions about the research please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685 or the Office of Research Support and Compliance at (512) 471-8871 or email: orssc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in this study. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

We may wish to include some of your quotes from the qualitative interview with the researcher in publications, at conventions, or as demonstrations in classrooms. Please sign below if you are willing to allow us to include your quotes and attribute them to you. I hereby give permission for my quotes from the qualitative interview to be also used in publications, at conventions, or as demonstrations in classrooms.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT-STUDENT DATA FORM

Please complete the information on this form before you sign the informed consent. This information you provide on this form will remain confidential and will be used for information purposes only.

1. How old are you?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> 22-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20-21 | <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29 | <input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65+ |

2. Gender: _____Male _____Female

3. First semester of enrollment at your college: _____

4. When did you participate in a student success program or course for male students?

_____Fall of 2007 _____Spring of 2008 _____Fall 2008 _____Not Applicable

5. What is your racial identification? (Mark Only One)

- _____American Indian or Native American
_____Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander
_____Black or African American, Non-Hispanic
_____Hispanic, Latino, Spanish
_____Native Hawaiian
_____Other
_____White, Non-Hispanic

6. What is your primary reason for attending this college? (Mark only one)

- _____Complete a Certificate
_____Obtain or Update Job-Related Skills
_____Obtain an Associate's Degree
_____Change Careers
_____Self-Improvement/Personal Employment
_____Transfer to a 4-Year College or University

7. Did you enroll in college immediately after graduating from high school?

_____Yes _____No

8. How Many TOTAL credit hours were you enrolled in the fall of 2007?

_____3 or fewer _____4-6 hours _____7-14 hours _____15 or more hours

9. How Many TOTAL credit hours were you enrolled in the spring of 2008?

_____3 or fewer _____4-6 hours _____7-14 hours _____15 or more hours

10. How Many TOTAL credit hours are you planning to enroll in the summer of 2008?

____ 3 or fewer ____ 4-6 hours ____ 7-14 hours ____ 15 or more hours

11. How Many TOTAL credit hours were you enrolled in the fall of 2008?

____ 3 or fewer ____ 4-6 hours ____ 7-14 hours ____ 15 or more hours

12. Who in your family has attended college? (Mark all that apply)

- ____ Mother
- ____ Father
- ____ Brother/Sister
- ____ Child
- ____ Spouse/Partner
- ____ Legal Guardian
- ____ None of the above

By signing your signature below you confirm the following information you provide is true to the best of your ability, and that you are 18 years of age or older.

Student Signature

Print Name

Date

APPENDIX E: INTERACTIVE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS (IQA)

FOCUS GROUP WARM-UP EXERCISE

Adapted from (Northcutt and McCoy, 2007)

I would like you to think for a while about first semester experience.

In a few minutes, I am going to ask you to tell me about your experience as being a freshman at this community college.

So let's begin.

- Please allow yourself to be as comfortable as possible.
- Put your thoughts from the day aside to allow your attention to focus on this topic.
- Close your eyes to increase your state of relaxation and your ability to notice what you know about how you and others are powerful in their environment.
- Now imagine yourself in your first day on campus. (long pause)
- See yourself engaging in the male initiative activities on campus. (Long pause)
- Notice your surroundings. (Long pause) Looking around you, take in the sights, the sounds that are associated with being in school for the first time. (Long pause)
- Allow yourself to become aware of your environment with all of your senses.
- Focus on what it feels like to be totally absorbed in your first semester of college. Be there in your mind. (Long pause)
- Review all your recollections up to this moment. (pause)
- Allow all these thoughts to remain calmly in your consciousness and ready to be revealed.

Thank you for allowing these valuable observations and recollections to come forward.

Please allow yourself to gently allow your consciousness back to this time and place and when you are ready, open your eyes.

Good. Thank you.

And now, with all that you remember—and that is all that you just noticed—please write down your thoughts on these cards.

Write one thought or experience per card. Feel free to record a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a picture to capture that thought . . . and

Tell me about your First Semester Experience.

APPENDIX F: IQA FOCUS GROUP AFFINITY WRITE UP

Focus Group Session #2-June 25, 2008

Student-to-Staff Interaction

- ❖ Some good advisors but others do not listen
- ❖ Good experience/ One-on-One Advising

Class Room Environment

- ❖ I liked my classes because I was able to express myself, and open a lot of people's mind about how they viewed others.
- ❖ My math and science skills were not up to par.

Student-to-Faculty Interaction

- ❖ Lack of classroom support
- ❖ Faculty expect you to better yourself and they try to help you in any way they can
- ❖ I wish the campus police would stop being bullies to us.
- ❖ My professors did not help me understand the material.
- ❖ When I first came to the college I was surprised at the teacher involvement. You get a lot of one on one attention in some of your classes.

Student-to-Student Interaction

- ❖ I stayed to myself during the first week of class.
- ❖ I only hang out with a few students on campus, and we are like brothers.
- ❖ I didn't want to meet new friends.
- ❖ Many of the students on campus have a high school mentality.

Environment

- ❖ Not given too much help.
- ❖ Campus Environment -Open doors a place to express yourself
- ❖ Stereotyped by teachers and campus police
- ❖ Can you tell the campus police to stop being so up tight?
- ❖ The campus police keeps messing with me
- ❖ I feel discriminated against by teachers and students.
- ❖ While on campus, my friends and I were harassed
- ❖ I appreciated the small classes at the college
- ❖ Can we hire some new campus police?
- ❖ Women-there are a lot of girls on campus

- ❖ Being in college was the best thing ever. I had a lot of friends and there were a lot of girls on campus.
- ❖ The first day was exciting. I had already experienced college before I came to this college. My only issue was that many people prejudged me by my appearance.
- ❖ We should have campus cops who are not so stereotypical.
- ❖ I was shocked to see people could smoke on campus.
- ❖ On the first day of classes, I was tired because I had a lot of things to take care of and there were a lot of long lines.
- ❖ The campus should have more fun activities.

Admissions and Registration Processes

- ❖ Online registration was easy and simple.
- ❖ Applying to the college was easy.
- ❖ The secretary in the advising office is awful.
- ❖ The secretary at the front counter is awful.
- ❖ The only problem with admissions is that they drop you from your classes if you do not have all the money to pay for classes, no matter the reason.

External Factors-Family Support

- ❖ Lack of family support
- ❖ I had support from my family and friends.
- ❖ My family cherished me because I chose to do something else—I chose to go to college.

Coursework

- ❖ The college classes were easy.
- ❖ The college classes were hard.

Campus-Based Activities

- ❖ I played soccer during my first semester of college.
- ❖ The Student Government Association (SGA) has had a positive influence on me.
- ❖ I would ask the college president to allow some events on campus to be purely about having fun.
- ❖ I was never really aware of many student activities on campus.
- ❖ Can we have other fun things to do on campus?
- ❖ Choir is a fun and they have great activities for students.
- ❖ We don't have a lot of activities on campus.
- ❖ Fun-we need more fun activities on campus

Wishes

- ❖ I wish could play all sports at the college.
- ❖ I would like to have a fair opportunity
- ❖ I wish we could all the women and make all A's in my classes

Student Success Courses and Programs

- ❖ I felt drawn to be different
- ❖ While in the HUMD class, I got the chance to see that there is a lot of males that have went through the same things I have.
- ❖ During my time in the HUMD class, I was encouraged to strive for greatness.
- ❖ In the HUMD class, it felt weird having a whole class full of males.
- ❖ I like the Stress Buster activities we learned about in the HUMD class, during exam time.
- ❖ The Stress Busters activity we learned in the student success has helped me out a lot.

Decision to Attend College

- ❖ I wanted to go back to school
- ❖ I wanted to go back to school
- ❖ I wanted to go back to school
- ❖ I wanted to go back to school
- ❖ I wanted to go back to school
- ❖ We are sometimes singled out and expected to be different
- ❖ I wanted an experience that was more communal but somewhat like a university

Financial Aid/Financial Concerns

- ❖ I loved the financial aid process it was quick and easy
- ❖ I didn't know how I was going to pay for college
- ❖ If I had one wish it would be full payment for all my college needs
- ❖ If I could talk to the college president, I would ask him/her to allow me to stay in college or help me find student loans.
- ❖ I had difficulty staying in college because I could not afford to pay for the classes up front.
- ❖ The financial aid process was tedious and was not aware the debt I created my during first semester in college
- ❖ I did not have access to tutoring because my parents both went to college and I did not qualify for the Upward Bound program.
- ❖ I was happy about the low cost of the courses at the community college.
- ❖ More scholarships for students would help.

- ❖ The financial aid I received was not enough.
- ❖ I had to overcome financial barriers, and just pay for college out of my pocket—in full.
- ❖ Books are expensive!

External Factors: Personal Concerns & Challenges

- ❖ I had a car wreck my spring semester of my first year so I had to drop my classes.
- ❖ I hated that I didn't live in Dallas because it would have been easier to get to college by bus, my car is unreliable.
- ❖ I had to overcome the influence of my friends
- ❖ There was a lot of peer pressure from my friends who were not in college.
- ❖ After being in college for a few weeks, I realized I needed to focus and stop being lazy.
- ❖ I came from a rough neighborhood, so being on a college campus was different for me and I did not think I would fit in.
- ❖ During my first semester of college, I felt overwhelmed.
- ❖ I am under a lot of stress especially when I first started college because I had a lot of financial concerns and I did not have the money to pay for my classes up front.
- ❖ I wish there was more money for me to go to college.
- ❖ When I first started college, I was worried about money. I felt like I needed more time and money.
- ❖ I did not have any money for college.
- ❖ I needed financial help.
- ❖ I had to overcome a lack of money.

Student Expectations

- ❖ At first, I use to ask the teacher to go to the restroom because that's what we did in high school.
- ❖ I thought going to college would be fun.
- ❖ Going to college was different and a little exciting.
- ❖ During my first semester of college, I was exhausted from working while going to school.
- ❖ During my first semester of college, I didn't think college was that serious.
- ❖ On the first day of classes, I was proud of myself for making it to college.
- ❖ I came to college because I just wanted to play sports.
- ❖ On the first day of school, I was a little nervous.
- ❖ I thought college was easier than high school.
- ❖ On the first day of classes, I was nervous because I that college would be hard.
- ❖ I needed information about transferring to a university. The college should provide more information to students who want to transfer.

- ❖ When I first started college I was open to new things and the idea of learning something new.
- ❖ I was very excited about be in college.
- ❖ I went to a bad high school, and I felt like I was not prepared enough for college.
- ❖ Transferring in the middle of my senior year of high school made things harder for me because I felt like I didn't learn enough in my last year of high school. When I got to college I felt like I wasn't prepared for college work.

Focus Group Session #2-September 25, 2008

Student-to-Staff Interaction

- ❖ Some of the people who work here are cool but some of the people get on my nerves and they are really mean. A lot of people knew my name after the first day of class.
- ❖ The people who work at the college are cool. I also like the college because the campus is small.

Class Room Environment

- ❖ In one of my classes there is a zero tolerance for late work and I do not like that [policy].
- ❖ In most of my classes there is a lot of reading and too much homework.
- ❖ I knew a couple of students already so a lot of people knew my name on the first day of classes.
- ❖ I am from this area so I know pretty much everyone here on campus and most people knew my name on the first day of classes.
- ❖ On the first day of classes I saw my baseball friends and other people who I went to high school with. Most of the players on the baseball team would come up to me and speak. They [baseball team players] knew my name on the first day of class.
- ❖ This college reminded me of high school, only everything is spaced out all over campus.
- ❖ On the first day of classes I saw a lot of people from my high school and we chilled [relaxed together] on campus.
- ❖ My experience at the college has been good. I am happy because I am doing what I love—playing soccer, and going to school.
- ❖ On my first day of class, I was worried about my ability to finish college.
- ❖ If anyone you know is looking for problems in higher education, look no further. This place is a Petri dish for problems you could to study.
- ❖ This is my first semester here at the college, for now, I like all my classes.
- ❖ On the first day of classes I felt like this college was a lot better than the other schools I attended.

Student-to-Faculty Interaction

- ❖ This college is like high school, but the teachers at this college are too serious.
- ❖ This college is like another high school. The teachers just want to get done with everybody.

- ❖ The teachers at this school give too much homework, but in all everyone here is pretty cool.
- ❖ Many of the teachers here are cool, but a lot of them are strict.
- ❖ My British Literature teacher is mean—she is the devil.
- ❖ I like all of my classes except for one class—my reading class. The teacher in that class is very mean and she gives us a lot of homework. In her class she does accept late work and she does not accept any excuses for late work—even if you have a job.
- ❖ This college is like a high school Hell Hole. It is a place where anyone focused on learning is looked at like an idiot. The teachers here should be given a Noble Prize for their patience with students. Most of the male students here are concerned with one thing—Women. Their behavior borders on ridiculous. On second thought, the border can't even be seen anymore.

Student-to-Student Interaction

- ❖ This college is like a high school because all the girls act just like they did when we were in high school.
- ❖ At this college I spend a lot of time with my baseball friends. Most of them attended high school with me so it still feels like I am in high school.

Campus Environment

- ❖ This college is like transferring to a different high school.
- ❖ This college is stupid because a bunch of people just come to sit around and they act really stupid on campus. I am ready to get out of this place.
- ❖ This college is like high school because I still see the same people I went to high school with over and over again.
- ❖ This college is kind of interesting.
- ❖ I feel this campus is all right most of the teachers are cool. Some of the students should not be in this [student success] class or in this school because they are disturbed.
- ❖ On the first day of class, I was lot. Getting to class was easy but I was overwhelmed by the environment because it was different.
- ❖ On the first day of classes I wasn't worried about anything. Registering for class was very complicated. I was also worried about finding a job.
- ❖ On the first day of classes I saw a lot of my soccer friends and a girl that I like, so the first day of class was fun for me.
- ❖ This college is like high school, with no more freedom.
- ❖ I fell okay about the classes I am taking this semester, and I am okay with the staff that works here.

- ❖ The first day of school was like high school all over again. I saw some of my high school friends, but there were a lot of new people on campus too.
- ❖ When I arrived on campus, my first thought was man what if I get lost and how am I going to find all my classes. I was greeted by some of the baseball players who play on the team at the college.
- ❖ This college is like high school. Some stuff in college is different but the same kind of immature people that were in high school are in college too. Immature people are everywhere.
- ❖ My first day on this campus was fine. I did not talk to anyone besides other baseball players.

Admissions and Registration Processes

- ❖ The registration process was easy.
- ❖ The registration process was confusing at first, but I was glad I did it myself.
- ❖ Mr. Bob [academic advisor/coach] registered me for classes.
- ❖ Coach Dally registered me for classes.
- ❖ I met with my coach to select my classes and it was fine.
- ❖ My coach registered me for classes, so the registration process was good for me.
- ❖ The registration process was fine; my coach helped me select my classes.
- ❖ The registration process was okay. My coach registered me for classes.
- ❖ My coach made my schedule, so I did not care about the registration process.
- ❖ Registering for classes was not difficult. My coach helped me with my schedule.
- ❖ My coach signed me up for classes. I did not choose my classes so it was not a big deal.
- ❖ The registration process was whack [horrible]. The lines were too long and the ladies at the front counter are mean.
- ❖ Registering for classes was easy for me because I already knew what I wanted to take.
- ❖ My baseball coach helped me select my classes this semester.
- ❖ My coach selected my classes for me.

Family Support

- ❖ My parents influenced my decision to go to college. They wanted me to be the first in my family to go to college.
- ❖ I set my own goals. I already knew what I wanted to do and who I wanted to be.
- ❖ My girlfriend, my dad, and my mom helped me set goals and encouraged me to go to college.
- ❖ My girlfriend and my grandmother helped me set goals and encouraged me to go to school.
- ❖ Some of my team mates on the baseball team in high school helped me set goals. Some of them were idiots, but some of them were cool guys. The cool ones talked to me about college.
- ❖ My parents made me feel like college was a big goal in my life.

- ❖ My parents, friends, sports, and the ole' lady [my girlfriend] helped me set my educational goals.
- ❖ No one helped me set goals for college.
- ❖ My dad and my family encouraged me to go to college so I could have a better future.
- ❖ My mother encouraged me to go set goals and go to college.

Coursework

- ❖ I do not like my philosophy or religion class. The teachers give too many reading assignments and homework.
- ❖ I have a lot of classes that I do not like because most of them are online. The classes are hard and there's a lot of work.

Student Success Courses and Programs

- ❖ This [student success] class is alright, but there are no females in this class.
- ❖ My favorite class is the student success class because we talk a lot about male issues and we do all of our work in class. We don't have a lot of homework.
- ❖ In the student success we learn a lot about life and different things. I don't like some of the stuff we talk about.
- ❖ The student success class is helpful.
- ❖ The student success classed is pretty good. Sometimes the students interrupt the teacher a lot in class. We would probably learn more if students did not interrupt so much. All of my classes are good. I feel like I will get an education here.
- ❖ The student success courses if fun, but this class is a little more challenging because it has all males in the class. I work better with female students.
- ❖ In the student success course, we can talk about anything and I feel like I can say anything I want to say. In this class I feel free to say what ever is on my mind and I like that.
- ❖ The teacher in my student success course tries hard to help the men in this class, but the students act like they do not care—it's pathetic.
- ❖ This student success course is stressful. I want to get this over with. In this class there are a lot of students who care nothing about learning. In this class, the only person I ever talk to is the teacher. In this class there are so many distractions because my fellow students say things that are irritating and pointless.
- ❖ So far, in the student success class, I have learned it is important to get to work and class on time.
- ❖ I like the student success course because we discuss a lot of things men go through and you are allowed to be open and say how you feel in the class.

- ❖ I decided to go to college because I wanted to be around the girls on campus. Most women want to be with an educated man, so I want to be educated so I can attract the girls.
- ❖ The student success course I am enrolled in is helpful because I am in the class with guys are going through the same thing I am going through. They have some of the same experiences I have.

Decision to Attend College

- ❖ My goal is to reach a level of education where I don't have to deal with ignorance all day. I plan to enroll in an educational facility where people encourage intelligence.
- ❖ I decided to go to college because I was tired of working hard, doing manual labor everyday of the summer. I knew I would not be able to find a better job without a college degree. This made me want to go to college and get a degree so I could get a better job.
- ❖ I chose to go to college because I wanted to get a college degree and play baseball.
- ❖ I chose to go to college because I want to have a good job and I wanted to keep playing baseball.
- ❖ I chose to go to college because I wanted to play baseball and I wanted to get paid more money.
- ❖ I chose to go to college because I wanted to be around smart girls who go to college.
- ❖ I chose to go to college because I was tired or working so hard on my job and I wanted a career change.
- ❖ I decided to go to college on my own and I set my own goals.
- ❖ I set my own goals basically. Some of my coaches in high school helped me figure out a lot about college.

Financial Aid/Financial Concerns

- ❖ When I graduated from high school, I moved out of my parent's house. This college did not offer me a baseball scholarship, so I had to come up with the money to pay for my classes on my own.
- ❖ On the first day of classes, I felt good and I had a lot of energy. I was also greeted by a lot of people who offered to help me.
- ❖ On the first day of class, I was worried that I would not like college life.
- ❖ On the first day of class, I was not worried about anything.
- ❖ On the first day of class, I felt like it was straight [good] and the people who attend college were [good] straight.
- ❖ On the first day of classes, I did not have any concerns or worries.
- ❖ On the first day of classes, I did not have anyone to help me and I was nervous, at first.
- ❖ On the first day of classes, I felt rushed to make a career plan.

Personal Concerns/Challenges

- ❖ I did not get financial aid so I was worried that I would not be able to afford to pay for school.

- ❖ On the first day of classes, I was hoping I would like my classes, teachers and [sports] team mates.
- ❖ Working and going to school is sometimes very tiring and I worry a lot because I feel like I do not have enough money to make ends meet.
- ❖ On the first day of classes, I worried about where I would park because the parking lot was full. I also worried about money and whether my financial aid would come in time for me to pay for my classes.
- ❖ On the first day of classes I was excited, tired, nervous, and bored.
- ❖ On the first day of classes worried about money and how I would pay for college and life in general.

Student Expectations

- ❖ I thought college would be easy because it is a junior college.
- ❖ On the first day of classes, I wasn't worried because a girl I like goes to college here and if she's here then I know it's [the college] alright.
- ❖ The classes in college are never fun.

APPENDIX G: METLIFE FOUNDATION STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

DISCUSSION GUIDE 2007-2008

*Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)
MetLife Foundation on Student Success Starting Right Initiative
Student Focus Group Discussion Guide 2007-2008*

Focus Group Outline & Timeline

Meeting Overview
Sign consent/human subjects' forms
Participant Introductions
Complete the Participant Profile Sheet
Discussion (includes 1 response form to be filled out by participants)
Summary
Thanks & Give Stipends

Approximate Total Time 75-90 minutes

Outcomes for the Focus Group Discussion:

1. *To better understand what students expect from higher education and how their earliest experiences compare with their expectations*
2. *To understand what potential barriers to student success might lead to new students dropping out during the first college term*
3. *To understand students' earliest experiences with the college and how those either motivate or discourage them in their efforts to succeed in college*
4. *To understand what factors might remove or ease potential barriers to early student success.*
5. *To understand how new students perceive the college's effectiveness in meeting their needs.*

The Focus Group Discussion

A. Introduction

1. Introduce facilitator.
2. Explain purpose of focus group
3. Explain desired outcomes and how information gathered will be used.
4. Explain and sign consent/human subjects' forms.
5. Introduce participants, course of study (if determined), academic goal; ensure that all participants are in their FIRST ACADEMIC TERM AT THIS COLLEGE
6. Describe facilitator role:
 - To ask questions and keep the group on track

- Explain that we'll be moving through the material fairly quickly, even though people might have more to say about a topic.
- 7. Describe participants' role:
 - Share experiences and opinions, both positive and negative.
 - No right or wrong answers
 - Everyone to participate in discussion and fill out response forms as requested
- 6. Logistics
 - 90 minutes maximum
 - Arrangements for water and restroom break
 - Other?
- 7. Ground rules:
 - One person speaks at a time; no side conversations.
 - No one person dominates; everyone will have a chance to be heard.
 - There is no right or wrong answers; the discussion is about your experiences at this college; what we learn will help not only this college but others as well to improve their work with students...
- 8. Audio taping/videotaping/note taking
 - For the purposes of gathering information to complement SENSE survey administration and MetLife Foundation Initiative on Student Success; writing a report to disseminate nationally and share with college leaders; gathering video clips for presentations at conferences and workshops and to appear on the CCSSE website
 - No names will be used in the report or in the video.
 - Thanks from CCSSE/MetLife Foundation Initiative and college for taking time to share your insights.

Questions?

B. Background of, and general information about, participants

1. **Fill out Student Profile Sheet.** Discuss specific elements if desired to better understand characteristics of participants.
2. Introduce participants, including: a) name, b) academic goals, and c) other colleges you've attended, if any. Ensure that all participants are over 18 and that all are in their first academic term at this college.
3. In general, are the people closest to you – spouse, partner, parents, children, employers, friends, roommates, others – supportive of your choice to be in college and understanding about the time you will need to spend in school-related activities? If not, describe the situation. Do you believe support and understanding from others will be a factor in your ability to reach your academic goals?

C. Outcome 1: To understand what students expect from higher education

1. Why did you decide to go to college? Did anyone urge you to go to college? Parents? Friends? High school teachers or counselors? Anyone else?
2. Why did you choose this college? Location? Cost? Academic reputation? A particular program? Other?

3. Before you came to this college, what did you expect college to be like? Where did those expectations come from? High school counselors and teachers? Employer? Friends? Family? Information you read? Other?
4. Think back to the first time you came to this campus. You're sitting in the parking lot or getting off the bus or subway, preparing to walk into the building to register for your classes. What's going through your mind? What are you worried about? What are you excited about?
5. Think to yourself and complete the sentence: *"This College is like a _____."*
[Give them silent time here.] Tell us about your response.

D. Outcome 2: To understand students' earliest experiences with the college
Admissions process

1. Now think about the **first time** you walked into a college building to get information, apply for admissions, register, or for any other reason. (Ask about online registration.) What did you see? Whom did you see? Were you greeted? By whom? How did you feel? Describe your experience.
2. Without naming names, are there particular individuals you remember meeting when you first arrived? Students? Faculty? Other college staff? How did you meet them? What were your impressions of the people you met?
3. Think back to your first week here and the people you met in class and outside of class. Who in the college knew your name at the end of the first week?
4. How did you learn what steps to take to apply for admission, enroll, register, and sign up for classes? Online? On campus? From college staff? What offices or programs? From friends?
5. Describe the process you went through when you first enrolled and signed up for classes.
6. Did you take placement tests? Were they required or optional? As a result of those tests, were you required to take any courses? If so, which ones?
7. During the process of registering for classes, did you meet with anyone on the college staff? If so, who was it? Advisor? Financial aid staff member? Faculty? Other students? Other?
8. Of the individuals you met with, were there representatives of particular offices who did an effective job of providing the information you needed? Advisor? Financial aid staff member? Faculty? Other students? Other? What made your contact with them helpful?
9. Were there representatives of particular offices who were *not* effective in providing you with the information you needed? Advisor? Financial aid staff member? Faculty? Other students? Other? What about your contact with them was *not helpful*?
10. Did you participate in any type of college orientation session? Face-to-face? Online? If so, was it required or optional? How long was it (hours/days/academic term)? Did you

find it helpful (What did you learn?)? If so, in what ways? If not, why not? If you did not participate in any type of orientation session, do you believe that would have been of value to you? What would you have wanted from that session?

11. Did you enroll in any other specific classes or programs that you were told would be particularly helpful for new students? (Listen for “student success class, 1st year experience, learning community, other) Describe that experience. (Good, not so good, other?)
12. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the easiest and 5 being the most difficult, how would you rate the ease or difficulty of registering for classes? Explain your answer.
13. During the process of registering for classes, did you ever consider walking out the door and not attending this college? If so, why? What made you stay?

Advising and Planning

1. Since coming to this college, have you received any academic advising? If so, was it required or optional? Did you meet with an advisor face-to-face? Online? What was the nature of your conversation? (Academic and career planning? Goal-setting? Discussion of your academic strengths and challenges? Choosing a program or major? Course selection? Other?)
2. Did anyone work with you to set goals? Have you laid out a plan for your time at school? Have you declared a major? Do you have a plan for earning your degree or certificate or for taking the classes that you need to transfer?
3. Is a particular advisor assigned to you so that you will be able to see the same person when you need advice or assistance in the future? Have you been to see an advisor since your initial advising session when you first arrived? Why or why not? If you have seen an advisor again, is it the same person as before or whoever was available?
4. How would you rate the quality and usefulness of this advising? Excellent? Good? Fair? Poor? Explain your response.

Academic experiences

1. Think about your first day in class at this college. What was it like? Of the classes you first attended, think about a positive experience. What was it like? What made it good?
2. Think about any class experiences you’ve had so far that have *not* been so good. What about that experience *didn’t* work for you? What could have improved that experience for you?
3. Think about an instructor whom you would say is one of the best you have had. What are the qualities or characteristics that individual has that help you learn? Style of teaching? Level of interaction with students? Availability to students outside of class? High expectations? Other?
4. Are you currently enrolled in any developmental/remedial/college prep classes? So far, what is your experience in this class (es)? Is the material challenging? Is the class interesting? Is it linked with any other classes? What do you understand about how this

course fits into your course of study at this college? Will you receive credit for this course? How do you feel about taking this course?

5. Have you had contact with any of your instructors outside of class? If so, how often? Did the instructor initiate the contact or did you? If you had contact outside the class, what kind of topic or issue were you discussing?
6. Describe your experience in class so far. How often do you work with other students during class? In what ways? Do you find it helpful to work with other students during class? If so, why? If not, why not?
7. Describe one of your typical classes so far, including both face-to-face time, labs and time outside of class. How much time do you spend listening to instructor lecture? How much time do you spend working with other students? Working on your own? How much time do you spend online? E-mail with your instructor? E-mail with other students? Classroom online discussion? Blogs? Other?
8. Have you worked with other students outside of class? In what ways? (Explore class projects or activities related to coursework.) If not, has the instructor indicated whether you will be working together outside of class?
9. Does your instructor communicate with you outside of class? If so, in what ways? Phone? E-mail? Office hours? Through online class management tool (such as Blackboard, other?), IM? Blogs? Other? What ways work best for you?
10. At the beginning of the term, did all (one or more?) of your instructors explain his/her expectations for students in the class? If so, what kinds of things did s/he include in those expectations? How do those expectations match with your own expectations for your college experience?
2. During your first couple of classes at this college, did your instructors have any activities to help you and other students get to know one another?
3. Have you missed any classes so far? If so, why? How many? If so, did you hear from your instructor or anyone else about those missed classes? Describe the conversation you had with that individual.
4. So far, for each of your classes, how much time per week are you spending studying (reading, completing assignments, practicing, reviewing notes, etc.) outside of class? Is it enough to help you complete your work and feel prepared? If not, what, if anything, might make it possible for you to devote more time to studying? Do you feel you need help prioritizing and balancing school work with other commitments you have?

Support Services and Other College Services

1. Has anyone given you information about services available to help you with your coursework if you need that help? Tutoring? Study groups? Other? If so, who gave you this information? Have you used any of these services yet? Why or why not? If you need additional help, how likely is it that you will use one or more of these services? Why or why not?

2. What, if anything, have you learned about any ways you can become involved at this college? Where did you get your information? Are you considering becoming involved in any particular activities while you're in school? Why or why not? Are there other activities or kinds of activities that you might become involved in if they were available to you? If so, what?

F. Outcome 3: To understand how students perceive the colleges effectiveness in meeting their needs

1. When you think about your very first experiences at this college, what stands out as the most positive experience you had? What made it positive?
2. After your first several weeks, in your opinion, what are the college's strengths? What is the college doing well that is helping you feel comfortable and able to stay on track? Are there particular individuals or particular offices at the college that have been especially important? In what ways?
3. What aspects of college cause you the most worry or stress? What do you think the college could do to help alleviate your worry or stress about those issues?
4. In general, do you find *students* at this college to be friendly and supportive or unfriendly and unsupportive? (Show of hands.) If possible, please describe an experience that explains your response.
5. In general, do you find *instructors* at this college to be available and helpful or unavailable and unhelpful? (Show of hands.) If possible, please describe an experience that explains your response.
6. In general, do you find *administrative personnel and offices* (give examples of offices they could describe) to be helpful, considerate and flexible or unhelpful, inconsiderate and rigid? (Show of hands.) If possible, please describe an experience that explains your response.
7. Is college different from what you expected it to be? If so, in what ways?
8. If you could suggest one or two things the college could do to improve the experience for a first-time student here, what would you recommend?
9. Right now, are you considering *not* continuing here? If so, what is the reason? What would cause you to leave?
10. Right now, what's the single most important factor that is keeping you moving toward success at this college?
11. How confident are you that you can stay and complete your academic goals? 1 being not very, 5 being extremely confident. Explain your answer.

F. Summary & Close

1. If you were giving advice to a friend who was planning to attend this college about what the student could do to be successful here, what advice would you give?

APPENDIX H: QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS SET

(FOCUS GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SESSIONS)

Adapted from the
Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)
Student Focus Group Discussion Guide
2007-2008

1. In general, are the people closest to you – spouse, partner, parents, children, employers, friends, roommates, others – supportive of your choice to be in college and understanding about the time you will need to spend in school-related activities? If not, describe the situation. Do you believe support and understanding from others will be a factor in your ability to reach your academic goals?
2. Why did you decide to go to college? Did anyone urge you to go to college? Parents? Friends? High school teachers or counselors? Anyone else?
3. Why did you choose this college? Location? Cost? Academic reputation? A particular program? Other?
4. Before you came to this college, what did you expect college to be like? Where did those expectations come from? High school counselors and teachers? Employer? Friends? Family? Information you read? Other?
5. Think back to the first time you came to this campus. You're sitting in the parking lot or getting off the bus or subway, preparing to walk into the building to register for your classes. What's going through your mind? What are you worried about? What are you excited about?
6. Think to yourself and complete this sentence. "This college is like a _____" [Give them silent time here.] Tell us about your response.
7. Without naming names, are there particular individuals you remember meeting when you first arrived? Students? Faculty? Other college staff? How did you meet them? What were your impressions of the people you met?
8. How did you learn what steps to take to apply for admission, enroll, register, and sign up for classes? Online? On campus? From college staff? What offices or programs? From friends?

9. Did you take placement tests? Were they required or optional? As a result of those tests, were you required to take any courses? If so, which ones?
10. During the process of registering for classes, did you meet with anyone on the college staff? If so, who was it? Advisor? Financial aid staff member? Faculty? Other students? Other?
11. Did you participate in any type of college orientation session? Face-to-face? Online? If so, was it required or optional? How long was it (hours/days/academic term)? Did you find it helpful (What did you learn?)? If so, in what ways? If not, why not? If you did not participate in any type of orientation session, do you believe that would have been of value to you? What would you have wanted from that session?
12. Did you enroll in any other specific classes or programs that you were told would be particularly helpful for new students? (Listen for “student success class, 1st year experience, learning community, other) Describe that experience. (Good, not so good, other?)
13. Did anyone work with you to set goals? Have you laid out a plan for your time at school? Have you declared a major? Do you have a plan for earning your degree or certificate or for taking the classes that you need to transfer?
14. Have you had contact with any of your instructors outside of class? If so, how often? Did the instructor initiate the contact or did you? If you had contact outside the class, what kind of topic or issue were you discussing?
15. Think about your first day in class at this college. What was it like? Of the classes you first attended, think about a positive experience. What was it like? What made it good?
16. Think about any class experiences you’ve had so far that have *not* been so good. What about that experience *didn’t* work for you? What could have improved that experience for you?
17. Have you worked with other students outside of class? In what ways? (Explore class projects or activities related to coursework.) If not, has the instructor indicated whether you will be working together outside of class?

18. Does your instructor communicate with you outside of class? If so, in what ways? Phone? E-mail? Office hours? Through online class management tool (such as Blackboard, other?), IM? Blogs? Other? What ways work best for you?
19. Has anyone given you information about services available to help you with your coursework if you need that help? Tutoring? Study groups? Other? If so, who gave you this information? Have you used any of these services yet? Why or why not? If you need additional help, how likely is it that you will use one or more of these services? Why or why not?
20. What, if anything, have you learned about any ways you can become involved at this college? Where did you get your information? Are you considering becoming involved in any particular activities while you're in school? Why or why not? Are there other activities or kinds of activities that you might become involved in if they were available to you? If so, what?
21. When you think about your very first experiences at this college, what stands out as the most positive experience you had? What made it positive?
22. In general, do you find *students* at this college to be friendly and supportive or unfriendly and unsupportive? (Show of hands.) If possible, please describe an experience that explains your response.
23. In general, do you find *instructors* at this college to be available and helpful or unavailable and unhelpful? (Show of hands.) If possible, please describe an experience that explains your response.
24. In general, do you find *administrative personnel and offices* (give examples of offices they could describe) to be helpful, considerate and flexible or unhelpful, inconsiderate and rigid? (Show of hands.) If possible, please describe an experience that explains your response.
25. Is college different from what you expected it to be? If so, in what ways?

Additional Questions

26. If you could suggest one or two things the college could do to improve the experience for a first-time student here, what would you recommend?
27. What do you think influence your decision to return to the college for a second year?

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VITA

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Val has also served on several Advisory Committees and Educational Taskforces to support dual credit and statewide articulation programs for 31 school districts and two community colleges in the Gulf Coast region. While completing her undergraduate degree, Val worked as an Instructional Lab Supervisor for the English and Language Arts Division at the *San Jacinto College Central Campus*. As a doctoral student, she served as an Administrative Intern at the *Houston Community College System* in Houston, Texas. She also worked as an Executive Marketing Assistant in for *Texas Children's Hospital*, located in the *Texas Medical Center*. In addition to Val's experience in marketing and public relations in higher education and the private sector, she has also taught developmental writing and business technology courses for four years, at the Community College level.

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